A MEMOIR

OF

DANIEL WADSWORTH COIT

1787–1876

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DANIEL WADSWORTH COIT

Gilman, William C

A MEMOIR

OF

Daniel Wadsworth Coit

OF

NORWICH, CONNECTICUT

1787-1876

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THE STORY OF
"SOME OF THE INCIDENTS OF THE
EVENTFUL LIFE" OF

DANIEL WADSWORTH COIT

RETOLD
WITH AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE
FOR HIS
DESCENDANTS AND NEAR KINDRED
AND ALL WHO CHERISH HIS MEMORY
BY ONE OF HIS NEPHEWS
IS NOW LOVINGLY INSCRIBED
TO

DANIEL COIT GILMAN

WHO DIED WHILE IT WAS IN PRESS
AT LOWTHORPE, NORWICH, CONN.
OCTOBER 13, 1908

BY HIS BROTHER

W. C. G.

DANIEL WADSWORTH COIT

A MAN'S own story of his life is, or ought to be, the most interesting of biographies. He, himself, a great part of the events he describes, telling what he has seen and heard and done, holds the center of the stage and animates the scene.

To see him tell the story, sitting by his own fireside or under the elms in the summer twilight, to listen, and to lead him on by questions from one adventure to another, is more charming than written words; for with pen in hand he sometimes assumes that his readers are as familiar as he is with the causes, the events, and the environment that governed or seemed to govern him in critical periods of his life,

and thus he leaves them in the dark as to facts of vital interest. Or again, in a retrospective mood, he may dwell on trivial and unimportant matters, "droll legends of his infancy," and the like, more interesting to himself than to any one else, that might be called "Twice told tales of a Grandfather."

The hero of this memoir, DANIEL WADSWORTH COIT, was named for his father's friend and companion in Europe, Col. Daniel Wadsworth, of Hartford. He was born in his father's house, "up-town," under the elms, in Norwich, Connecticut, on November the twenty-ninth, 1787, and in that house he died, on the eighteenth of July, 1876.

It is noteworthy that, notwithstanding the chances and changes of a life of very remarkable adventure, this house was his home for most of his years, and still more noteworthy, in these days of

migration and inevitable family changes, that not only he himself, but his father and his grandfather and his younger son, Daniel Lathrop Coit the second, a youth of great promise, — four generations, — ended their days under the same roof.

In the year 1877, twelve months after his death, a brief sketch of his life, written by his brother, Joshua Coit, of New Haven, was printed for his family. This was reprinted ten years later, together with a filial tribute by his son, Charles Woolsey Coit, of Grand Rapids, as supplementary to his Autobiography, in which he had said that "at the repeated solicitation of his family and friends and for the gratification of his children he had jotted down some of the incidents of his eventful life." This was a well-chosen expression, for while of course no man can continue the story of his life from year to year to the very

end, his modesty and delicate sense of propriety prevented more than a slight reference to some of the most interesting "incidents of his eventful life," or entirely suppressed them.

A writer in the "Atlantic Monthly" quotes a witty remark that "besides biographies and autobiographies there are ought-not-to-be-ographies." The autobiography of Daniel Wadsworth Coit is not open to the latter designation, for it occasions no regret but by its brevity. Our knowledge of him has been increased, however, by letters to his family now in the possession of Mrs. Charles W. Coit, and of his granddaughter, Mrs. Edward Wilder Haines, and still more from letters, greater in number and of equal interest, from his parents, and brothers and sisters, preserved in the archives of Lowthorpe.

His father, Daniel Lathrop Coit, who was descended from John Coit, of Salem,

Massachusetts (about 1630), and from the Reverend John Lathrop, a victim of persecution in England, and an emigrant to Massachusetts in 1635, died in the year 1833 at the age of seventy-nine years.

His mother, Elizabeth, daughter of Captain Ephraim Bill, was descended from John Bill, of Boston (1635), and from Simon Huntington, of Saybrook and of Norwich (1659). She died at the age of seventy-nine in the year 1846.

Among his ancestors are also John Gager and Thomas Adgate, who are enrolled among the founders of Norwich (1659), and John Perkins and Joshua Abel. Such ancestry, good English stock, transplanted to new soil, is a heritage for which later generations may congratulate themselves.

He was the oldest of six children, three sons and three daughters, and,

unlike some families who seem to boast that they "enjoy poor health," serious illness was almost unknown among them, and the average of their ages at death exceeded four score years. It was a happy family, and the bond of affection established in childhood was firm to the end of their days. The house on the hillside, under the elms, where they were born, built by their father, and kept in repair and improved from time to time, remains, after nearly a century and a quarter, in the possession of two of his granddaughters, and is practically unchanged in appearance both without and within.

In June it was as delightful then as it is in these degenerate days, when one shudders to think of their winters and winter nights, and, worse still, of the everlasting spring; not the "everlasting spring" of the hymnal, but the real, old fashioned, uncommonly late spring,

with impassable roads, no public conveyances, private vehicles quite out of commission, the meadows bleak and desolate, and the wheels of industry stopped by the ice-bound water courses. The house was, indeed, abundantly stored with provisions and raiment and fuel, but there were no steam heaters, no furnace, no kitchen range sending perpetual streams of hot water to every floor,—nothing but open wood fires which must be carefully banked up at bedtime to prevent the escape of a single spark, and to keep a few coals alive for the morning. Happily, when the call was heard, "heap on the wood, the wind is chill," there was plenty of "old wood to burn."

There was no evening lamp to be lighted; the "astral" had not yet come into use; and constant nightly experiment determined how far a little candle could shed its beams. Providence had

not raised up Mr. Rockefeller as a light-bearer to the whole world to crush his rivals, the poor whales, and drive them out of a profitable business with his standard oil. The night air was cold enough for the requirements of modern advocates of the refrigerative treatment of tuberculosis, and yet, although this family escaped it, the dreaded white plague was not unknown in the town. But though they knew them not there were alleviations, for they were spared self-registering thermometers, telling how cold had been the night, and weather bureau forecasts of a colder to-morrow!

His boyhood was spent in Norwich, where, and at the adjacent town of Lisbon, he attended the best schools; but though he was a fair scholar there can be no doubt that his best education was received in the home circle under the guidance of his father, whose cultured mind had been improved by foreign

travel, and under the sweet influence of his devoted mother.

His nearest neighbors were his own cousins, the Lathrops, seven bright boys and girls whose ages differed not widely from those of his own family. Their mother, Mrs. Hannah Bill Lathrop, and two of the daughters known to the present generation as Mrs. Emily Perkins and Mrs. Hannah Ripley are still held in affectionate remembrance. There were other Lathrop cousins, Coit and Huntington cousins, and Perits, and a host of cousins-once-removed, many of whom were his schoolmates and near friends. To be remembered with them also is Lydia Huntley, afterwards Mrs. Sigourney.

The wise man of Portland in the east told his attractive daughters that he knew some one in Norwich who had a pair of rose-colored spectacles which would bring a distant relation as near

as a second cousin! Those glasses came down from a former generation which had proved their usefulness in a wide family circle.

His natural preference was for active life out of doors; he knew the hiding-place of the big trout in the brook, and many a quail and partridge and woodcock fell before his unerring fowling-piece. From his father he inherited a love for practical work in the garden and orchard, and these pursuits, not less than the cold winters, strengthening his constitution, were an admirable preparation for the toilsome and perilous journeys of later years.

When he was about fourteen years old, in 1801, in the absence of his father on a long journey to Ohio, he was quite the man of the house; and keeping a watchful eye on affairs generally, and especially on the garden, he made frequent reports to his father. In July

he says: "The garden looks as well as it did last year;" and again he speaks of "inoculating the peach trees." His father replies: "Daniel's account of outdoor transactions affords me much pleasure, not only that the things mentioned have been done, but that he is thoughtful to mention them."

Without quoting largely from other letters, extracts from a letter from his mother to her husband, and from a letter from the father to the son, will sufficiently illustrate the family relation at that time.

Elizabeth Coit to her husband, July 21, 1801:

"I hope, my dear, you will find the children have made some improvement, but do not expect too much or you will be disappointed. I feel sometimes almost impatient with the slow progress they make when I reflect how many things they have to learn and how fast time flies, and I very sensibly

feel my incapacity to fill up their time to the best advantage. I cannot sufficiently impress on their minds the importance of study and learning while they are young. Some relaxation I know they require, but I am frequently at a loss how far to indulge them. Daniel's propensity for amusement is very great, but his judgment is not sufficient to direct his choice. Books which afford the most rational amusement he does not relish alone, and I have little time to hear him free from interruption. He is as attentive to my business as I could expect, and is very obedient, as are all the children."

Daniel Lathrop Coit to his son Daniel, aged fourteen:

Youngstown (O.), 19 August, 1801.

My dear Boy, — I don't know but you will expect a letter directly to you during my long absence, and I shall be well satisfied in writing to you if it will afford you either pleasure or advantage. . . .

I take great satisfaction in learning from your mama, and, indeed, from your own

letter and by Col. Huntington, that you are so attentive to the concerns of the family in my absence. I am likewise gratified that Bristol[1] is so careful and attentive in matters of a domestic nature; indeed, I ought to have commissioned you to thank him that he was desirous of my remembrance, &c., thereby manifesting his regard for me. I therefore do it now.

We ought at no time to receive any favor or civility of even so small a kind without some suitable acknowledgment, and surely thanks are a cheap and easy return. Of this, my dear, I wish you to be truly sensible, and that every species of ingratitude is a great blot in the character of any person possessed of reason and understanding. . . . Always be ready to acknowledge a favor, and to repay it as a debt of honor and justice. At the same time do not always wait to be indebted in this way, but be as ready to grant as to receive a favor, remembering

[1] This Bristol, an old negro slave, an inheritance from Daniel Lathrop Coit's aunt, Madam Green, was a tolerated tyrant in the household. He it was who refused to recognize Sunday as the Sabbath when by chance there were no baked beans for breakfast!

that if we even sometimes make some sacrifices in this way we are sure to be repaid in kind, or, what is of more consequence, have an approving conscience, which is at all times one of the greatest sources of happiness a man can enjoy.

I think I can truly say that I have no more fervent and anxious desire of an earthly nature than to procure for your mama and my children as great a share of happiness and contentment as they are capable of, and you will readily agree that my experience is greater than yours, and that the advice I give you in order to promote your happiness must be more safely trusted to than your own opinion where it shall differ from mine. . . . The present is the time for the cultivation of your understanding and forming useful and good habits, and you may believe me when I assure you that when once good habits are formed they will be as easily practiced as bad ones and will afford infinitely more satisfaction. Study, then, my son, to improve your mind and to render yourself by kind, affable, and agreeable manners, pleasing and acceptable to all whom

you have reason to respect and esteem. . . . I wish you to be convinced that if you set out thus early in life with an inflexible resolution, and continue to pursue it with steadiness, you may make yourself almost whatever you wish. It is little I can do for you; I can just point out the road, but it must be your own exertion that shall carry you through it. I feel a great desire that you shall become agreeable and estimable to all your acquaintance, and this, I know, you can easily do, and that to effect this will be the most ready way to promote your happiness.

Your studies, I hope, you will regard as of great importance, for on them will depend in a great measure your future prospects in life. Learning is the inlet of knowledge, and by knowledge men are raised above the rest of creation, and a few among men above the rest in Honor, Respect, and Esteem. . . .

Adieu, my son; be attentive and obedient to your mama, and endeavor to make up her loss of me as much as is in your power.

Your loving and affectionate Father,

DANIEL L. COIT.

These benign influences were not lost upon the "Dear Boy." He heard the instructions of his father, and forgot not the law of his mother, and when he was old he did not depart from them.

When he was about fifteen years old he and his sister Lydia and his brother Henry were sent to Mr. Hale's school at Lisbon; his parents, with the younger children, Maria, Eliza, and little Joshua, having removed to New York in consequence of his father's business engagements. Twelve months later he joined them, and after a few months with Gilbert and John Aspinwall, merchants and importers of dry goods, was formally indentured to them for a term of nearly five years, until he should attain his majority.

The indenture, signed and sealed by all the parties to it, bound his employers to teach him "the trade, art, and

mystery of a merchant," — he on his part, and his father for him, agreeing that "he shall of his own free will and accord his master faithfully serve, his secrets keep, and his lawful commands everywhere readily obey; shall not contract matrimony; shall refrain from vice, and from business on his own account; and in all things shall behave himself as a faithful apprentice ought to do during his term of service." His only compensation was to be his board and washing. The theory was that the employer stood in the place of a parent to the apprentice, was interested in his welfare, gave him special opportunities for advancement and improvement, with a commercial education that was a full equivalent for his services. By this system, now almost obsolete, except as it may be suggested by the youthful experience of Admiral Sir Joseph Porter in "Pinafore," he received a training

that was invaluable in the important and complicated transactions in which he was concerned in later years. The art of writing a faultless business letter, acquired early in life, was an accomplishment not to be despised, in which he excelled.

The particular duties of the youngest clerk, as he describes them, were "to open the store at an early hour, to sweep and dust the floors, to make fires throughout the winter, and not infrequently to roll empty hogsheads and barrels through the streets for packing, and to shoulder and carry goods from one part of the city to another." If the hours were no more than sixty minutes long there were more working hours in twenty-four than there are now, and that work was often carried well into the night appears by letters to his parents, written when he was "so sleepy he could hardly keep his eyes open."

He was desirous of acquiring a knowledge of the French language, and therefore changed his boarding-place to a family where it was spoken, but carried with him the kind interest of his landlady, who offered to continue to mend his clothes, "But," he says, "of course I shall not think of letting her."

Replying to his father's suggestion that he should avoid bad company, he says:

"I should be sorry to have you under apprehension of my getting acquainted with bad characters here, as my acquaintance is very limited, and I have been more confined at home this winter than usual, as my French has required my attendance evenings, and I have no other time to myself. I have, however, to thank you for your good advice on this subject, and shall always be very thankful to you for it."

Before proceeding with him in the next steps of his career it is interesting

to close this chapter with an extract from a letter of his brother Joshua to his nieces, from which other quotations will be made hereafter.

"He had a physical organization admirably adapted to what he took in hand. His eye was quick, keen, and true as an Indian hunter's; his hand pliant, dexterous, and ready in all the manipulations for which he had occasion; his frame, light, sinewy, active, and, at least in early life, capable of long-continued exertion. His early love for field sports, in which he never entirely lost his interest, gave scope and exercise to all these qualities to which they greatly contributed.

"His beautiful handwriting, his familiar letters, written with facility and despatch, in businesslike form, without flourish and without blot or erasure, were, particularly if accompanied by a plan or sketch, like the careful work of a civil engineer. He was so much my senior that I was too young to take any part in his field sports before he had left home for a counting-house in New

York, but I fell heir to sundry ingeniously constructed boy's sleds, box traps, fences, and snares for game, set up in the woods, and other like devices by which, I am sorry to say, I profited less than I might have done."

If in the latter years of his apprenticeship, realizing that his knowledge and experience had become valuable, he impatiently looked for the day when he should earn something more than bread and butter and cease to be a burden on his father, he nevertheless fulfilled his contract to the end. He then engaged for a year as assistant with his friend and cousin, David Greene Hubbard, at a salary of $500, with the privilege of trading for himself: not an enormous income, indeed, but infinite riches compared with nothing. After another twelvemonth he began business solely on his own account, employing as a clerk his brother Henry, of whom he

wrote in praise as "doing as well as he could expect, and as likely to become of much service after a little more practice." He and his father also entered into partnership with their kinsman, William Leffingwell, of New Haven, but owing to the hard times it was of short duration.

But the most interesting of his many enterprises was obtaining and manufacturing quercitron bark, then as now used by tanners and dyers. With this object he traversed the forests of New Jersey where he resided for a time, and established a mill for grinding and preparing the bark for export. His cousins, G. G. and S. S. Howland, also took an interest with him, and his father engaged in the manufacture at Norwich. It is characteristic of father and son that they were scrupulously careful that their product should be of the best possible quality for shipment, and that, sparing

neither labor nor expense, they gave their own close personal attention to details. They were sensible that it cost as much to transport a poor article as a good one, and that a good reputation went far to command a good price. His father wrote to him, "That you have made any profit, or are like to, gives me real pleasure; but be cautious, — not too sanguine: keep within your own depth."

A recent writer in the "Forestry Magazine" (November, 1907), says: "A famine in tan-bark oak is seriously threatening the Pacific coast tanning industry. Continual harvesting is rapidly depleting the supply, and disastrous fires the last fifteen years have destroyed bark that would be worth one and one-third million dollars."

The monotonous routine of work, however, was not without relief. He was always a welcome guest in the large

family circle of his Howland cousins, sons and daughters, in New York and Phillipsburgh; there were occasional opportunities for a day's sport with dog and gun in New Jersey or on Long Island; and the considerable skill in sketching and drawing in water-colors which he acquired at this time afforded him great pleasure as long as he lived. Perhaps it is significant, too, that a young man of fine appearance and attractive manners was somewhat particular about the ruffles of his shirts!

Although he himself does not speak of military honors, we know that in the year 1814, when the Atlantic coast was ravaged by the British fleet, and New York was in such peril that almost every able-bodied man was pressed into service, he was not found wanting, but served with the Huzzars in defence of the city.

The first eighteen years of the nineteenth century were not altogether propitious for mercantile business. In this country feuds of federalists and republicans, in congress and in the newspapers, raging with unrestrained bitterness and malignity, resulted not infrequently in personal violence and the deadly duel. Hard words were freely used, compared with which the forcible explosions of ebullient wrath in high places that sometimes shock us to-day are like the gentle roaring of a sucking dove. The vituperation and scurrility of the newspapers of the period would be intolerable even in modern yellow journals. Can any one imagine the present editor of the "Evening Post" as adopting for his own the following words directed by his illustrious predecessor, William Cullen Bryant, to Thomas Jefferson, and addressing them to Theodore Roosevelt?

"Go, wretch! resign the Presidential chair,
Disclose thy secret measures, foul or fair;
Go, search with curious eyes for hornèd frogs,
'Mid the wild wastes of Louisiana bogs."

Our southern border and great western frontier were harassed by hostile Indian tribes; communication and transportation by land or water were difficult and expensive; strikes and labor riots were not infrequent; the slavery question was vexatious; and arguments for and against "protection of our infant industries" kept merchants in perpetual perplexity. It was a serious question whether the tariff on imported calf skins should not be raised so as to sustain the price of our quercitron bark!

More than this, the English Orders in Council, the Berlin and Milan decrees, the impressment of American seamen by the British claiming the right of search, the blockade of our ports, the embargo, the capture of hundreds of

our merchantmen by the French, were among the exasperating causes that culminated in the war of 1812 and paralyzed our commerce.

A young merchant, unwilling to risk everything by running the blockade in violation of law with the hope of making a fortune, could do but little more than make occasional purchases of commodities, that could be bought cheap in New York, and ship them to Connecticut, receiving in return coarse country produce and manufactured stuff that might be salable in the city. Some adventurous spirits, taking chances, found it expedient at short notice to seek seclusion in foreign parts. It is no wonder, then, that "at the end of ten years in commission and shipping business, it had resulted in little benefit beyond the experience acquired." But how valuable was that experience! It was invested capital.

It is remarkable that during this long period, when financial and commercial affairs were at the lowest ebb, when taxes were enormously high, and great unrest prevailed throughout the country, this constant, intimate family correspondence was almost exclusively confined to domestic affairs, with scarcely an allusion to public events, not even to the achievements of our navy on the ocean and great lakes, nor the famous victory of General Jackson at New Orleans, nor, nearer home, to the burning of Stonington in 1814 by the British.

But in spite of everything the country grew and prospered. Extensive internal improvements were projected and carried on by the government; lighthouses were erected; steam navigation began on the Hudson River; the Coast Survey, of inestimable value, was founded; and the acquisition of Florida and Louisiana, by means however questionable at the

time, added enormously in the end to the prosperity of the country. With the administration of President Monroe began what was popularly called "the era of good feeling," and at about the same time there came a turn in the tide of the affairs of our hero which led him on to fortune.

In the year 1818 his cousins, G. G. and S. S. Howland, already mentioned, well-known merchants in New York, invited him to enter their counting-room on a salary larger than he had ever received, and gave him encouragement that they might in the near future offer him a better position. Within a few months, in partnership with Peter Harmony, a Spanish merchant resident in New York, they determined to send to Peru a cargo of firearms, munitions of war, and other merchandise, and, through the favor of the Spanish minis-

ter, obtained a license for the admission of the cargo into that country, which was then at war with the adjoining province of Chile. Accordingly they fitted out the small, fast-sailing brig "Boxer," and gave Mr. Coit the situation of supercargo. The supercargo was a person of no small importance, for, although the captain was charged with the navigation of the vessel and discipline of the crew, upon the supercargo, as the confidential agent and personal representative of the owners, devolved the responsibility of disposing of the cargo and of collecting and remitting the proceeds, under instructions of course, yet with large discretionary power in emergencies.

The vessel was loaded with despatch and with secrecy lest the purpose of the voyage and the nature of the cargo should become known; the crew was shipped, and his own preparations were

made; but much to his regret he had no opportunity of visiting his home in Norwich, where his father was suffering from an accidental fall.

And now began the Voyage of Life!

"Journal on board the Brig Boxer, William Skiddy, master, from New York towards Northwest Coast of South America.

"Sunday, Sept. 27, 1818. Got under way at 9 o'clock, A. M., with a light breeze from N. West: were becalmed in the bay at 3 P. M.: at 8 P. M., a breeze springing up, passed by the Hook, and at 9 P. M. discharged the Pilot and proceeded to sea.

"All hands on board in good health."

These are the first words of the supercargo's private log-book, in which he kept a daily record of latitude and longitude, of the temperature of the air and water, of distance traveled "per log," with brief notes of the weather, the vessel's course, and other incidents of the long voyage of one hundred and

six days, covering by his calculation 13,405 miles.

Needless to say, there were no stops for coal, nor was this a junketing cruise, like that of President Roosevelt's "Armada" in its majestic course to the Pacific. Not a single port was entered, and direct communication was had with but one vessel, a homeward-bound Nantucket whaler, whose captain came on board and became the bearer of a letter to New York. The highest temperature recorded is eighty-eight degrees, and the lowest thirty-nine degrees. The longest day's run was two hundred and forty-three miles, and the shortest eighteen miles. The vessel crossed the equator on November 1, but we have no record of the "high jinks" which traditionally celebrate that event. At midnight a week later, however, sufficient excitement of a different kind was created by the imminent danger of shipwreck on

one of the small precipitous islands of Martin Vass, to the eastward of Brazil. This peril was happily averted, and the voyage, he says, "was not unpleasant, with the exception of about thirty days coming round Cape Horn, where we experienced much bad weather, and were three weeks of the time under storm sails." "I am not anxious," he adds, "to make the voyage again in winter, in a vessel not one of the strongest." The only diversion for the voyager in the gloom of the perpetual fogs of the region was in watching the whales and porpoises, the penguins, and other aquatic birds that abounded in the air and sea.

At this time, also, occurred the most exciting incident of the voyage, — a mutinous demonstration by the mate and half the crew, who, defying the captain, refused to obey orders. Their purpose was to take possession of the vessel, run her into a port of Chile, and

sell the arms to the government; but it was frustrated by the coolness and courage of the captain, who subdued them with his pistols, though the situation was for a time alarming.

The arrival of his vessel off the harbor of Callao, eight miles distant from the city of Lima, on the 14th of January, 1819, ended his voyage, but by no means ended his adventures, for, being becalmed late in the day, it became necessary for him to take a boat with two seamen and row in to the shore in the hope of finding a pilot; "But," he says, —

"the shore being more distant than we supposed we were benighted before arriving there: and in consequence, not being able to land on the rocky shore with the surf rolling heavily, I steered for what I supposed to be the port, and about eleven o'clock at night fell in with the guard boat on duty patrolling the harbor. My explanations, being anything but satisfactory I was arrested

as a prisoner of war and put on board the Spanish Ship of war 'Esmeralda.'"

There were two parties in Peru at this time, the royalists, who supported the Spanish viceroy, and the revolutionists, who advocated a popular government. Moreover, the government of Chile had designs upon Peru, and with the co-operation of Lord Cochrane, who had distinguished himself in the English navy, was known to be preparing to send a fleet from Valparaiso against Lima; it was, indeed, hourly expected.

"It was natural, therefore, that suspicion should attach to a boat discovered at midnight prowling about the harbor, and that I should be arrested as a spy. Our arrival on the frigate occasioned no little stir. The captain with his leading officers formed a council and subjected us to a long course of examination, the result of which was that I was sent on shore in charge of an officer to the Admiral. With some diffi-

culty he was aroused from his slumbers, and was so alarmed that he came in person with us on board the ship and again sifted the sailors and myself with questions. It was finally determined to await the arrival of the Boxer, and I was shown to the ward room and provided with comfortable quarters until the following afternoon when the brig, which had been concealed by the island of San Lorenzo, hove in sight, and in a few hours freed me from my anxiety and temporary confinement."

It now became a very serious question what to do with his cargo. Business naturally came to a standstill; and as opportunities to sell were for a time cut off, it seemed equally unsafe to discharge it or to leave it on board. Under the circumstances the best course seemed to be to bring the brig within the Spanish lines for protection and land his cargo as soon as possible. Hardly had he done so when in came Admiral Cochrane with a fleet of five large ships,

while the Spanish vessels protected by the forts prepared to give battle. The consternation of the spectators on shore was increased by a dense fog which rendered the approaching ships invisible. Our supercargo, who had landed before the action began, "was gratified by seeing the whole of it from a balcony on the water's edge at little more than half gunshot from the enemy. Their balls came nearer than was pleasant, not a few going over our heads, and some entering the houses about us." The engagement, lasting only an hour, resulted in the loss of a few killed and wounded on each side, when the admiral withdrew his ships, saying that he had come in only for a reconnoissance. Some days afterwards, by proclamation, he declared the whole coast in a state of blockade. The supercargo determined to send his vessel home with a cargo of cocoa, and about the 24th of

March she ran the blockade under cover of night. This gave him an opportunity to write long letters to his parents, describing his adventures during his absence of six months, and expressing his anxiety on account of the condition of his father when he left New York.

He now found himself in a most perplexing predicament. He had not burned his ships, but, what was as bad, he had sent the "Boxer" home, and had no alternative but to stay and complete his business. He had remitted the proceeds of a large part of his cargo, which had been sold so advantageously that he estimated the net profits of his principals at one hundred and fifty per cent, but unfortunately the Spanish government, which had purchased arms to the value of $30,000, while acknowledging its obligation, was without money to make payment. To leave the coun-

try would be to abandon his claim, and in remaining he would be subjected not only to great personal inconvenience but to great anxiety lest an overthrow of the existing government should result, as it probably would, in the repudiation of the debt. A stranger in a strange land, ignorant of the language, with no friendly adviser, he could only wait and hope with all the patience he could command.

Lima, the capital of Peru, founded by Hernando Pizarro on the festival of the Epiphany in 1535, was originally named the City of the Kings, in honor of the kings of the Orient. Called by Prescott "the Beautiful City, the fairest gem on the shores of the Pacific," it was long renowned for its great wealth, its commercial importance, its magnificent palaces, churches, and convents, and as the seat of the university of San Marco, established in 1551, and remaining to-

day the oldest institution of learning in the western hemisphere.

In 1819 its glory had departed in consequence of volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, internal dissensions, and wars with the neighboring provinces. Callao, its ancient seaport, a place of considerable importance, had been destroyed by an earthquake seventy years earlier, and was now nothing but a filthy, squalid landing place. To say that earthquakes and revolutions were of daily occurrence would be an exaggeration, but Peru had long been in a state of physical and political unrest. The foundations of Lima had been laid deep and strong by Pizarro, however, and traces of its former splendor still remained.

The climate in January, the summer season, was delightful. Although the situation was but twelve degrees south of the equator, breezes from the Pacific on the west and from the Andes on the

east so tempered the air that the heat was at no time oppressive. There was never any rain and there was never a drought, for natural streams from the mountains and artificial irrigation produced luxuriant vegetation and an abundance of the choicest fruits and such tropical flowers as are never seen in higher latitudes except in hot-houses.

The population of Lima was about seventy thousand, half of whom were negroes, mulattoes, and Indians. The most respectable were emigrants from Spain or were of Spanish descent. It was the policy of the government to exclude from the country all foreigners, and indeed to prohibit exports and imports of merchandise except under enormous duties. Only about fifty other foreigners, admitted by special permit, were in Lima at this time. As one consequence of their exclusion there were no decent hotels or board-

ing houses for their accommodation. Whether conditions are now better or worse doth not appear, but a newspaper recently reported that a traveler in the country was temporarily imprisoned pending a controversy about his papers. On his release he betook himself to a hotel, but speedily escaped and asked to be readmitted to the greater comforts of the common jail!

It was then customary in Lima, however, for merchants to receive into their own houses captains and supercargos of vessels consigned to them, and thus our hero became the guest of Don Pedro Abadia, a man of wealth, of great urbanity and integrity, the head of an important commercial establishment. Under the same roof resided his partner, Mr. Blanco, with his wife and four children. Writing of them to his mother in August, 1819, he says: "I have found them both very honor-

able men and good friends, but even in the best educated families there is a license in conversation and a freedom of speech which astonishes one accustomed to different habits."

Under the same date he continues:

"I am astonished when I reflect that it is now almost a year since I left New York and longer since I have seen you. The novelty I have met with has made the time pass quickly and pleasantly with the exception of the time occupied by my voyage, but the scene now begins to alter, the novelty is wearing away, and when I consider seriously the state of society here and the habits of the people I am more than ever desirous of being back again in my own country. For a considerable time I lived in the house of Mr. Abadia. Since then I have taken a snug and comfortable house in company with a Mr. Mercier of Baltimore, who is here on commercial business. He is a well-informed, gentlemanly man, and I consider myself fortunate in having such a companion.

"I have acquired so much of the language in six months that I can speak it a little, and understand it, when spoken, considerably. In the further space of six months I hope to know it very tolerably. Amusements are very limited; the theater is miserable; there are many religious processions and bull-fights.

"My principal occupation, apart from studying the language, is drawing, and I hope to give you a perfect idea of the appearance of the country, the dresses of the inhabitants, and of the Indians of the interior, by sketches which will have some novelty to recommend them."

Reluctant though he was to remain in Lima he became convinced that there was an opening there for an exceedingly profitable business. Writing on this subject to his father he says:

"I have embraced this opportunity to write particularly to my friends in New York, having it in my power to hold out very strong inducements to them to make further shipments to this country. They

can, if they are not blind to their interests, take advantage of the circumstances and add another fortune to that they already possess. I have told them that the country is a most unpleasant one to reside in, both on account of the bad state of society and of the state of war which it is in, and the jealousy of the inhabitants to foreigners, with other disagreeable circumstances, and that nothing but the expectation of realizing something extraordinary would induce me to remain here any considerable time. I think I ought to have twenty per cent of the net profit, but am willing to leave it to you to make such terms with them for me as you think proper."

His anxiety on this point was not relieved, and great was his disappointment in December when he was still without letters from his principals or from any of his family. Writing to his sister Maria he says:

"I hardly need tell you how anxiously I am expecting to hear from you. It is now

more than eight months since my vessel left this for New York, and should my friends have determined on sending her back, as is my calculation, she will undoubtedly be here this month. If my hopes are realized and I hear you are all well and happy it will be the greatest pleasure I can possibly enjoy."

But his hopes were not fullfilled; the inexplicable delay in the arrival of letters continued; he was without response from his principals; he was unable to transact any business, and the possibility of collecting his claim was more and more questionable.

At last, however, when his prospects were as gloomy as in the darkest days off Cape Horn, by the exercise of remarkable tact and business sagacity he accomplished what had seemed impossible, and established his reputation as a far-seeing man of affairs. The government, still with an empty treasury, was finally induced through the friendly

influence of Don Pedro Abadia to give Mr. Coit permission to export a cargo, and consented to remit the duty thereon in satisfaction of his claim. He had already made the acquaintance of Captain Cleaveland of Boston, and persuaded him to charter a Swedish vessel then in port, and load her with cocoa which was the only article which could be exported in sufficient quantity to answer the purpose. Mr. Abadia undertook to purchase the cocoa at Guayaquil, six hundred miles to the northward, it being understood that our hero should proceed thither to superintend the loading, and then set sail for Gibraltar where he was to sell his cargo and divide the proceeds as the agent of all parties interested. To accomplish all this as successfully as he did demanded business talent of the highest order.

The Viceroy at the same time gave Mr. Coit a license to introduce a cargo

of merchandise into Peru free of duty, —a concession which was believed to be of considerable value, as he was at liberty to use it himself or to dispose of it for his own advantage.

We next hear from him at Guayaquil in April, 1820, by a letter to his sister Maria, which closes this account of his first residence in South America.

"Eighteen months have elapsed since I left New York, and I am yet without a line from any of my friends in the United States or, indeed, any information respecting them.

"My coming to this port is connected with a very long voyage I have in view which removes to a considerable distance the pleasing hopes I had entertained of seeing you all within a few months.

"I have engaged with Captain Cleaveland, of the ship "Beaver," to take the consignment of a large Swedish ship to be loaded here with cocoa for Gibraltar. Should the whole of this undertaking be crowned with suc-

cess I shall be enabled to return to my native land under circumstances favorable beyond my most sanguine hopes when leaving it.

"This port, about six hundred miles north of Lima, is situated on a river of the same name about eighty miles from the Pacific Ocean. The population is twenty thousand, a large proportion being indians, mulattoes, and negroes. The women, celebrated for their beauty are called the Circassians of South America. Delicious fruits, pine-apples weighing ten or twelve pounds, oranges, cocoanuts, and other fruits are in abundance, yet I think we should suffer materially in an exchange of fruits. They are strangers to our fine apples, pears, peaches, plums, and apricots, whereas we can generally have the best of theirs from the West Indies, though not in the same perfection.

"Education and customs are strikingly different from ours. Little children are very precocious and are taught to dress and act like grown men and women. The leading traits in the character of the women are vanity and avarice: they are almost without

modesty, and even young ladies use language that would be shocking to North American ears.

"We are ready to go to sea this morning in company with Captain Cleaveland who will proceed in the "Beaver" and be the bearer of this, while I shall sail for Gibraltar."

His strictures on society in Guayaquil were somewhat mollified, however, by the gratifying attentions he received from the Rosa Fuerto family, at whose house he became a frequent visitor. It was rendered exceedingly attractive by a large circle of beautiful and well-bred women, — sisters, wives, and children, — all living under one roof and forming a delightful society of their own.

His next letters were to his father and mother from Gibraltar at the close of September, 1820. In them and in his autobiography he records the incidents of his voyage in nearly the following words:

"It is with no small pleasure that I address you from this side the Atlantic, and I may say my happiness would be complete if I could be assured that no unpleasant occurrence has happened in the family in my long absence. I have been more particularly anxious respecting my father, from the distressing accident which visited him at the moment of my leaving New York.

"This day, September 27, completes two years since I left New York, during which period I have not received a line from any of my friends in the United States. My last letters were sent from Guayaquil by Captain Cleaveland, but as I hear that he put in to Lima leaky probably they never reached you.

"I left Lima on the 5th of March, proceeded to Guayaquil, and loaded my ship with eight hundred thousand pounds of cocoa in bulk, and sailed on April 16 for Gibraltar. The voyage of one hundred and fifty days was monotonous and tedious. The captain gave Cape Horn and the Falkland Islands a wide berth, and we crossed the equator after three months without having

sighted land. In a violent gale we were in imminent danger; the captain was utterly confused and took refuge in the companion way, but finally by some means the vessel righted and got on her course.

"A few days later an alarming sight appeared. At a distance a long, low, warlike-looking craft, having the appearance of a privateer, was watching us, and we fully expected to be boarded and plundered if nothing worse. On she came, then hove to, and we could see the boats lowered with men in arms. Our case seemed desperate, when, to our infinite surprise, after the boats had made half the distance to us, a signal was given for their return, which was instantly complied with. For some cause that we were left to conjecture the stranger had taken alarm and left us.

" Near the close of the fifth month, when we hoped to arrive at Gibraltar in twenty-four hours, a violent " levanter " brought us again under close-reefed sails, and we drifted at its pleasure. At this time we had a fresh alarm in the appearance of two war-vessels which we had reason to fear were Algerine

pirates, but to our great relief they took no notice of us and passed on their way.

"This delay of eight days was the more annoying as our limited supply of food was reduced to poor salt beef, and wormy, very wormy, sea-biscuit. But still, I cannot say I really suffered; good health and good appetite made me relish even this coarse fare. Again, when perhaps twenty miles east of Gibraltar, the wind and current drifted us within range of the guns of the fort off Cadiz. In this position we were in danger of being boarded by the officers of the fort, and knew not what our fate might be, but providentially a light breeze sprang up and we were for a third time relieved from anxiety. In a few hours we found ourselves in the port of Gibraltar."

Addressing his mother he says:

"I expect to go from hence to England, and it would be very pleasing to me if I could return home from thence and visit you all, but I am inclined to believe I shall undertake another voyage to Peru in the hope it may enable me to return to my

native land with more reputation and under more favorable conditions than I can at present. Such being the case, I am sure you will acquiesce in the propriety of the measure, notwithstanding it may occasion you some uneasiness and disappointment.

"I cannot avoid saying here that I am sensible of having occasioned you more of those painful sensations all my life than either of your other children, — certainly not from a wish to do so, but perhaps too often from a selfish disposition and the result of imprudencies. I assure you I shall never feel entirely at ease on this point until I have it in my power to make some amends by a more guided and correct conduct, which I pray a kind Providence may afford me the means of showing by returning me to you in his own good time."

This was not the language of a homesick child, but the deliberate words of a grown man whose warm affection for his family and his old home appears throughout his correspondence.

His autobiography gives this account

of his sensations on his arrival at Gibraltar.

"In recalling the experiences of my life I cannot recollect hours so full of unalloyed happiness as those which I now enjoyed. As before stated, I had staked all on this eventful voyage, and now that it had proved successful everything in the future seemed bright and hopeful. I was soon to be in the possession of what, to a young man, was a handsome capital. I had gained mercantile knowledge of a foreign trade that others would be desirous to possess, and should soon have the pleasure of visiting some of the most interesting capitals of the Old World. The change in my physical condition it is difficult to describe. I was at last freed from the discomforts and dangers of a most tedious voyage in an old tub of a ship. In the place of fare that a beggar would have turned his back upon, my table was furnished with all the luxuries of a well-supplied market, for scarcely had our anchor struck ground when boats were at hand with a profusion of meats, bread, fruit; in fine, everything that a

famished appetite could crave; the weather, too, was delightful, and the bands in the forts enlivened us with their music.

"My cargo was soon disposed of, with the exception of a small venture of my own, which I shipped to Bordeaux to avail of a better market. I now closed up the affairs of the voyage so far as the various parties interested were concerned, and, remitting to my friends in New York the balance due them on the "Boxer's" voyage, was now prepared to proceed to Paris and to carry my own private views into effect. I determined to make the journey by land, as it afforded a favorable opportunity of seeing something of the interior of France and Spain."

His stay at Gibraltar was not prolonged after he had completed his business, and he then proceeded by mules and post chaise, in company with two English gentlemen, to Madrid. The journey, though fatiguing and rather uninteresting, afforded some novel

glimpses of Spanish low life. Progress was necessarily slow; the vehicle and the harness and manner of driving were quite primitive; the driver kept up a lively conversation with his mules, calling them by their names, and when language and gesticulation failed to quicken their pace, like the old farmer in the fable he tried what virtue there was in pelting them with stones. Accounts came to his notice of robberies on the road which were so frequent that travelers generally went armed or with an escort of cavalry.

During his stay in Madrid illness deprived him of much enjoyment he might have had in that interesting city, and he greatly regretted his inability to visit the Escurial, with its wonderful creations of Murillo. He made an effort, however, to witness the grand and imposing ceremony on the return of the king to the capital, attended by

the queen and officers of state, in royal carriages, with outriders and other attendants glittering with gold, rich and showy beyond anything he could have imagined.

With his usual good fortune in making friends, he was invited by Mr. Forsyth, our minister to the court of Spain, to accompany him in his private carriage to Bordeaux; but although he accepted the invitation, he was compelled by illness to part company at Bayonne, near Biarritz, on the shore of the Bay of Biscay.

After a detention of two weeks he proceeded by diligence to Bordeaux, where he was cordially received by the German house of Classman, to whom the cocoa he had shipped from Gibraltar had been consigned. An agreeable acquaintance thus formed with Mr. Classman's family added much to the pleasure of his visit. He met a large

circle of intelligent, polite, and thoroughly well-bred people at his table, where he dined frequently, and as it was understood he was not quite well, a bottle of claret was placed by his side for his special use. "But such claret! I had never seen the like. It was a perfect bouquet, and its flavor was equal to its fragrance!"

Writing to his father, he says:

"You will think that I travel under very great disadvantages from the circumstances of my having come to Europe without a single letter of introduction, and I might almost say without even an acquaintance (indeed I can with truth say it of that part of Europe I have already passed through), but I can assure you I have not found the least inconvenience on this account. In Gibraltar I received the most particular attention from all the American and some English gentlemen there that letters would have given me, and I have brought letters here which have, I can venture to say, made

me some very excellent friends that have overpowered me with attentions."

"I also take with me to Paris and London sufficient letters to give me an introduction to the society of those places. I mention this so that you may have no uneasiness on my account in this particular."

He concluded his business in Bordeaux without delay, and then took the diligence for Paris, with little expectation of disposing of his license there, but anticipating much pleasure in seeing the wonderful city. Here, again, good fortune attended him, for he found in Paris Don Pedro Blanco of the house of Abadia, and Philip Mercier, both of whom he had known intimately in Lima. By them he was received with the utmost hospitality, and under their auspices, to his great enjoyment and instruction, he saw all that was best worth seeing in the beautiful capital. But his hopes were fixed on London,

and thither without much delay he directed his steps.

If on entering the great metropolis he had felt considerable elation of spirits it would not have been unnatural. He was no longer a clerk or an agent for principals who were far away, and who might or might not approve of his conduct of their affairs, in which he had been compelled to assume grave responsibilities. He was now his own master, possessing capital which he himself had acquired, and holding a license which, as has been seen, he had reason to expect would prove valuable. He had tested his powers and knew his strength, and had good ground for self-confidence, especially in his knowledge of men and affairs political and commercial in South America. It was many years later that he said:

"it surprises me, now, to reflect with what boldness and confidence I entered London

where I was utterly unknown, and without even the advantage that letters from home might have given me. The probability of my introducing myself and my business to strangers in such a manner as to meet their favorable consideration was very slight. My friend Mercier had kindly given me a letter of introduction to Frederick Huth & Co., a house with which he was somewhat acquainted. This was my only chance for making my antecedents known aside from my own representations."

These representations must have been made in an exceedingly winning and convincing manner. Merchants of large affairs are naturally cautious in receiving the proposals of strangers; but his ardent enthusiasm, his confidence in himself and in the value of the propositions he had to submit, were so tempered by his deferential courtesy, his accurate knowledge of details and his scrupulous truthfulness, that he had every reason to be gratified by the impression they

made on Mr. Huth, and by the considerate reception he gave him.

The partners of the firm of Frederick Huth & Co. were German by birth. They possessed a large capital and had long been established in London, where they enjoyed a high reputation among merchants.

After consideration, Mr. Huth's opinion was that the license was of less value than Mr. Coit had believed, as the necessities of Peru would compel the admission of vessels, license or no license; but he recognized the value of Mr. Coit's knowledge and experience, and offered him a compensation of $3,500 for his time and services in selecting and purchasing a cargo for shipment thither. This offer exceeded his expectations and the arrangement was concluded forthwith.

As the condition of affairs in Peru did not encourage immediate action in

sending a cargo thither, he improved several weeks of leisure in seeing something of the country. He visited Hull, Leeds, Manchester, Chester, and Liverpool, finding in all these places so much that was novel and interesting that the time passed pleasantly, especially in visiting the great manufacturing towns.

"Leeds," he said, "is filled with smoke and dirt and appears like a great workshop, but the neighboring country is very fine with numerous elegant buildings and country seats, — withal a good hunting and shooting country. These sports are now out of season, or I should have desired to devote a few days to them. You perceive I make good the old saying that 'as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.' Perhaps I am more disposed to be pleased with Liverpool from the very flattering manner in which I have been received here, and a most hospitable reception from Mr. Woolsey and his good family. Our cousin Abby Woolsey is a most excellent and lovely woman, and since my recent

intercourse with her I am more than ever sensible of the loss her friends sustain in being deprived of her society. I have corresponded with her since my return to London, having consented to expose my own poverty in letter writing for the satisfaction her letters have afforded me. In a recent one she says, 'You must let me know if you hear from your own family. Do not forget to remember me with sincere affection to each one, but particularly my always dearly beloved aunt.'"

His business in London was not so engrossing but that he had leisure for amusement and for seeing all that was most worthy of attention in the great city. He was particularly fortunate in having an opportunity of witnessing the imposing ceremonies on the occasion of the coronation of King George IV. in Westminster Abbey in July, 1821. By great good fortune through the kindness of his friends he obtained a seat that proved to be one of the best

in the house, and the magnificence of the spectacle amply repaid him for the tedious delay in waiting from daylight to eleven o'clock. As the King was leaving the Abbey in procession he was gratified with a near view of him while the walls were echoing shouts of "God save the King!" "Long live King George!"

In the following September the expedition for Lima, in which he had been interested, was ready for sea, and he was tempted by very favorable proposals from the owners to join it. But he had other prospects in view, and remembered with anything but pleasure his last tedious voyage of five months from Peru. His experience at sea might have taught him to say with Shylock: "Ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land rats and water rats, water thieves and land thieves, I mean pirates: and then, there

is the peril of waters, winds and rocks."

The object he had in view was to establish himself, with the advice and assistance of the good friends he had made in England, Mr. Huth and others, in commercial business in Gibraltar, and to Gibraltar he proceeded by way of Paris where he was detained much longer than he had expected on account of the unhealthy condition of Spain. He had no reason to regret the detention, however, as will appear hereafter. It is interesting to contrast his opinions of Paris with those expressed by his father forty years earlier, and printed in the memoir of Daniel Lathrop Coit.

"I continue much pleased with Paris and give it preference over London as a place of residence. There is such a variety of objects to amuse and engage the admiration in the magnificent and numerous public edifices, gardens, and streets, as well as in the exhi-

bitions of fine arts collected from all parts of the world, such as are not to be met with in any other country. Indeed, the round of pleasureable enjoyments is such that foreigners particularly, and not infrequently our countrymen who come here solely for amusements, give themselves up too much to them and commit very great follies. Yet, notwithstanding this, Paris is still a place of greater industry than perhaps any other. Manufactures are carried on to a great extent. The women are more industrious and their time more devoted to profitable employment than in any other country. Paris must be much altered and improved since you were here. A principal improvement made by the late Emperor, besides fine public buildings and monuments, are the piers of free stone on both sides of the Seine, the whole length of the city."

On his journey to Paris he stopped for two or three days at Southampton and the Isle of Wight, and passed the time very agreeably in sketching from nature. At Newport he was diverted

by the annual fair, lasting three days and made a frolic, in which servants from all parts of the island are engaged for a whole year, — a novel performance, similar to the scene represented in the opera of "Martha."

To his great surprise he was recalled from Paris by letters from Mr. Huth so urgent and important that he had no alternative but to abandon his plans for Gibraltar, and return immediately to London. Mr. Huth's proposition was nothing less than that they should form a copartnership to last for six years, for the transaction of a commercial business in Valparaiso and Lima, under the firm name of Frederick Huth, Coit & Company. His share of the profits was to be thirty-two per cent. A vessel with a valuable cargo was to be fitted out immediately and he was to go out in her and have full control of the business in Lima where he would make his

residence. As the existing house of Frederick Huth & Co. possessed ample resources, and enjoyed the highest reputation as merchants in England, Germany, and Spain, the success of the enterprise seemed to be assured in advance. Such a proposition, coming from such a source, was not less gratifying than surprising, and although it deferred for a long period all hope of his return to the United States, there could be no question as to the propriety of its immediate acceptance.

In company with Mr. Huth he then visited the principal manufacturing towns in England, making purchases for shipment and negotiating for further consignments. Arrangements were perfected for sending a large and valuable cargo in a fine English ship in which he was to sail, and he estimated his own share of the profits on that cargo alone at not less than ten thousand

dollars. Writing from London in May, 1822, he says:

"I confess I am a little surprised to find people willing to adventure their property at this moment so freely to a market so distant, and from which the accounts have been very unfavorable, but so it is, and I have no doubt I shall have as many goods shipped to me as I can possibly dispose of, even if a million sterling, per annum. . . . It may be considered a singular circumstance, situated as I have been in England, a stranger, coming here without the advantages I might have had from letters had I come direct from the United States, that I should so soon have had two offers from different houses of the first respectability to form establishments abroad and take the entire responsibility of them, but such has been the case."

He and Mr. Huth continued their tour as far as Liverpool, where they received every civility from Mr. and Mrs. Woolsey. Mr. Woolsey strongly advised them to change their arrange-

ments in favor of Mexico, and proposed to take an interest in promoting an establishment there; but Mr. Huth's plans were already irrevocably fixed.

There was unavoidable delay in making the cargo ready for shipment, coming as it did from different points, part of it from Hamburg, and it was not until early in June, 1822, that the "Ship Catharine, Robert Young, master, from London to the coast of Chile and Peru," with Mr. Coit, and a gentleman whom he had consented to receive on board as a passenger, took her departure.

His last letter to his family from London is dated May 26. He says:

"I have heretofore mentioned to you the high reputation as an author which our countryman, Mr. Washington Irving of New York, has established for himself in England by the publication of his 'Sketch Book.' I am happy to say he has now added not a little

to his fame by a new work which he calls 'Bracebridge Hall.' By reading early and late I have got through it, my engagements to the contrary notwithstanding, and can truly say I never laughed and wept more at one and the same book in my life. I am willing to think I am not altogether an impartial judge of the work from the friendship and esteem I have for the author and the interest I feel in his success, and, indeed, in all that relates to him.

"It would have been a great gratification to me if I could have looked in upon you in Norwich, if but for a very short time, previous to this undertaking; but under this deprivation your letters just received are a greater consolation than you can imagine. To learn that our dear mother's health is even better than usual is, at this particular moment, the greatest pleasure that could have occurred to me. May a kind Providence, my dear sister, watch over and preserve us all to a happy meeting, at some future day."

One more letter, and this the last from London, was to Mrs. Woolsey

on the 2d of June. He acknowledges the courtesies extended to him and Mr. Huth in Liverpool, and, with affectionate farewells, sends her a copy of "Bracebridge Hall."

There is some reason to conjecture that the impossibility of maintaining close and frequent communication with his principals, Messrs. Howland and Harmony, during his first sojourn in Lima, resulted in misunderstanding on their part, and in criticism which he could not but regard as unwarranted and entirely unjust. It was gratifying to him therefore, on the eve of his departure from England, to receive from his Howland cousins renewed expressions of friendship, good will, and confidence, with cordial congratulations on his prosperity.

In the same connection his father wrote to him:

"Your very good friend, G. G. Howland, who passed through town recently, took occasion to congratulate me on the very honorable conduct manifested by you in this transaction. It had immortalized you even in New York, and placed your character in a most shining and conspicuous light, and given you almost unbounded credit and eclat."

A long interval, nearly four months, elapsed before the date of the traveler's next letter, September 29, 1822, from Monte Video. Of this letter there remains only a fragment, which suffices to show that the tedious voyage was interrupted by a violent gale as they approached Cape Horn which so strained the ship as to make it necessary to return to the Rio de la Plata for repairs.

At midnight, through the ignorance or incompetence of the captain, the vessel ran upon a reef on the island of Flores and for a time seemed to be in

imminent peril, but by means almost miraculous was righted and proceeded to Monte Video, not far distant. There, as it was found necessary to discharge the cargo and repair the vessel, he was detained for a month under conditions that were not altogether agreeable, though he lived in the house of an English gentleman who took charge of the ship, — "his wife an agreeable lady, much superior to most foreign women in Spanish countries, who are apt to become negligent in neatness and propriety, or what we should esteem so, and fall more or less into the customs of the natives. I really do not think there are a dozen very good-looking women in all Monte Video, and not half that number that would be called pretty with us. A very handsome person there is not!" He had not forgotten the early lessons in propriety that he had learned at home, nor the attrac-

tive graces of the girls he had left behind him!

Although the damage to his ship and cargo was not very serious, the detention at Monte Video gave him an opportunity to modify his plans for the continuance of his journey. He had already made two disagreeable voyages around Cape Horn; and he now goes on to say:

"You will readily imagine after all my trials I am ready to grasp at almost any expedient to avoid another journey around Cape Horn, and will be pleased that I propose to go from hence to Buenos Ayres, about one hundred miles up the river, and from thence by land to Valparaiso, there to have the ship meet me."

He was evidently undismayed by the captain's unfortunate attempt to navigate the ship overland in proposing to go overland himself!

"The journey is no trifling one, being about sixteen hundred miles, to be performed on horseback: however, I can undergo fatigue of body better than anxiety of mind; severe exertion never injures me, and I think I was never in better condition to bear it than at present."

Having put his ship in order to proceed on her voyage, he left Monte Video and went up the river to Buenos Ayres, where he remained a fortnight waiting for traveling companions, and there he received favorable news from Peru promising an excellent trade and a liberal profit on the merchandise he had shipped.

"These you will acknowledge are bright prospects, and should they be realized only in part I shall soon be more independent in a pecuniary point of view than I have ever been, and shall be able, I hope, to return to my own country, a wish that is now dearest to my heart."

His traveling party, besides himself, consisted of three American gentlemen, and numbered nine in all, including drivers and servants, fully armed and prepared to resist any attack from the roving bands of lawless savages that infested the country. They were also provided with bedding, cooking utensils, provisions, and other indispensables for the journey. The alarming reports of robberies and murders on the road almost made him wish that he had gone with the ship, but it was now too late.

On the 29th of November, 1822, all things being in readiness, he began his memorable journey across the continent of South America. It was his birthday, and he wrote:

"It may not occur to you, and I therefore remind you that I am writing on my birthday. I feel sensibly the rapidity with which time passes, and when I reflect how little I

have done to any good purpose at this advanced age, I am startled and cannot be without apprehension for the future. Still, I have great reason to be thankful for many, very many things, and, if my present prospects are realized only in part, I shall have it in my power to return before a very long time to a life which is dearest to my heart."

He could not imagine what vicissitudes the next fifty years of his life would bring!

Not even the anticipation of robbers, who fortunately did not come, could make the long carriage drive over the pampas from Buenos Ayres to Mendoza, at the foot of the eastern Cordillera, anything but monotonous and wearisome. These vast plains afforded grass for herds of innumerable cattle, and especially wild horses, and the chief diversion at the frequent post-houses was to see two or three men, when a relay was called for, ride off into a herd

and drive in one or two hundred of all sizes and descriptions, and capture such as were desirable with their unerring lassoes.

Mendoza, a large inland town, was and had long been a halting-place for travelers who were about to cross the Andes. Here the country was in a high state of cultivation, abounding in fields of grain, orchards, and vineyards. It was the destination of two of his party, and, after two days' rest, Mr. Coit, with a Lieutenant Nixon of the United States navy, who had been in the company, mounted their horses and with their guides began the exciting ascent over the Uspallata Pass.

After seventy-five years, on the summit of this pass at an altitude of thirteen thousand feet above the sea, on the boundary line between Chile and Argentina symbolizing peace between those countries, stands to-day,

supported by a cross, a colossal statue of Christ!

Not far distant in the south was the volcanic mountain, San José, twenty thousand feet high, and in the north towered Aconcagua, nearly twenty-four thousand feet, supposed to be the highest peak in the western hemisphere. Over this route, traversed by Mr. Coit in twenty-one days, eighty-six years ago, a railway now in course of construction is so near completion that a recent traveler in midwinter, climbing the most arduous part on his feet, and using the railway in the ascent and descent, did what had been believed to be impossible and crossed the continent in five days.

Huge masses of rock hurled from the summits to the valleys far below in many places obstructed the road and gave abundant evidence of a recent earthquake. Of this he received full

intelligence at Santiago, a fine city ninety miles in the interior, and on his arrival at Valparaiso, his destination, he witnessed its appalling results, the city lying in ruins, and the inhabitants destitute of food, shelter, and clothing.

It is not without surprise and regret, considering his artistic appreciation of the picturesque and sublime in natural scenery, and his power of narration which could make a remembered scene seem actually visible, that we find in his letters that still exist next to nothing of the wonderful region, then almost unknown to civilized men, through which he had passed. He plainly intimated that he might give a further account of his journey at a future day, but no trace of it has been found.

In interesting contrast with the experience of her kinsman, Mr. Coit, is Mrs. Faith Ripley Atterbury's charming account of her twice crossing the South

American continent with her husband, about eighty years later, over nearly the same route, but under very different conditions. The panorama of the Andes as seen from the Pacific between Valparaiso and Lima was not less glorious than in his day, but those ancient cities, while retaining remains of their former grandeur, had been transformed by commercial enterprise and modern civilization into gay and brilliant capitals. Even Callao, which he had found no better than "a filthy, squalid landing-place," called forth her cordial approval as "quaint, little Spotless Town," looking so cosy and attractive and friendly that she was loath to leave it.

Mr. Coit's ship made a good passage around the cape and reached Valparaiso shortly before he did, a fortunate circumstance, as it enabled him to go on board at once and make his home there

during his stay in the city, which was prolonged beyond his expectations in consequence of the unsettled condition of political affairs in Peru and incessant conflicts between the royalists and the revolutionists. The detention was not detrimental to his interests, however, for his cargo found an excellent market. He says: "I live constantly on the ship and am comfortable in all respects. With the troubles of others ringing in my ears I have reason to be thankful that my individual concerns are more than favorable." The sufferings that he witnessed on every side appealed to his sympathy, and he took much pleasure in rendering substantial assistance to the United States consul and his family, who had lost everything by the earthquake. The United States seventy-four gun ship "Franklin," Commodore Stewart, was in port at this time, and with him and his family he had a friendly acquaint-

ance, as also with the family of the consul.

He remained three months in Valparaiso and then went north to Quilea, the port of Arequipa, where his ship delivered a portion of her cargo. Before he could collect the amount due to him the persons to whom he had made sales found it necessary for their safety from the opposing army to make their escape from Arequipa, and, choosing not to lose sight of them, he followed them to the ancient city of Cuzco, formerly the seat of the Incas, the native kings, who ruled the country for hundreds of years before the Spanish conquest. The four months that he spent there gave him full opportunity to survey the ruins of the once great and magnificent city, its fortress, its palaces, its churches, and the famous Temple of the Sun.

In December, 1823, after an absence of more than three and a half years, he found himself once more within the walls of the city of Lima, with sensations very different from those with which he had left it. He was then making a bold venture in which he could not be fully confident of success; he returned at the head of an important establishment which had already yielded handsome profits and now opened more brilliant prospects.

Writing to his mother he says:

"I assure you, my dear mother, I have felt much gratified by the particulars you have given me of your family group and of our immediate friends and neighbors in whom I shall always feel a lively interest. It also affords me much pleasure that in being separated from your own sons, you should have found in Mr. Gilman all that an own son should be. I feel this as the kindest favor he could do me, and I shall never be forgetful of it."

To his father, after speaking of the outlook for good business as exceeding his expectations, he says:

"I had advanced pretty well in the knowledge of the Spanish language before leaving this for Europe, at any rate sufficiently to transact my business in it and carry on a conversation with any one; but the French, which I acquired to a certain extent while in Europe rather confused my Spanish, and that, with want of practice for so long a time put me back very much. However, I have recovered what I lost, and am, I think, more advanced than before."

Except for a comparatively short trip to Quilea, the following years of his life in South America were spent in Lima. Here he occupied a large and commodious house after the Spanish fashion with a family that usually numbered about twenty. Household expenses were enormous, but commissions were large in proportion, and he sub-

mitted without much repining to whatever inconvenience as part of the regular course of business, hoping it might the sooner enable him to accomplish his ardent desire to return to his native land. Writing to his mother at two o'clock in the morning, he says: "Our business keeps our house constantly thronged with captains and supercargoes, who give me not a moment's leisure or peace except when I am in bed."

Although he engaged in no speculative ventures for himself or for his firm, his constantly increasing commission business taxed his powers to the utmost. In February, 1825, he had eight vessels in port consigned to him with cargoes amounting to $400,000. In August he names eleven more, and in the January following he was overwhelmed with business, cargoes coming from the United States, England,

France, and Germany exceeding a million of dollars. Although he did not think it possible in April, 1826, that his firm could ever have another three months' business as profitable as the last, yet after eighteen months he could say, "the present year is the best we have ever had," and he entertained great hopes that the final six months of his partnership would be "a very handsome winding up." All this is the more remarkable because of disturbances and conflicts between the opposing political parties, and the constant fluctuation in the prices of all commodities imported into the country. It had been a period of great financial distress in Lima. Very many families who had been in affluent circumstances when he first came to the country were now reduced to want and beggary.

Not less gratifying than his material prosperity was the cordial approbation

of all his acts and proceedings repeatedly expressed by his partners in London. In a private letter to him, in April, 1826, Mr. Huth wrote:

"Let me assure you your letters always give me the greatest pleasure, they are so interesting, both from their important contents and from the masterly manner and style in which they are written. . . . Could we but have peace and harmony in Peru what a wide field would be open for you and for us: as it is, we must not complain, we have had hard work to set things agoing, but by degrees I trust it will be easier, and rest assured, no effort shall be wanting on our part to support the establishment. . . . I conclude with the renewed tender of my most sincere friendship, and with the assurance that no one can possibly take a livelier interest in your welfare."

His partnership was to expire by limitation on the eleventh day of April, 1828, and to that day he looked forward with the eagerness of a school-boy expectant

of his vacation. The years of his absence were now reduced to months, and, as he counted them, he declared that nothing would induce him to remain in Lima beyond the term of his original agreement. In this connection he says:

"What changes have not a few years produced in my situation! To look back seven years to when I first arrived in this country a stranger, with but a small cargo under my direction, and now, to find myself at the head of an establishment doing more business than any other in Peru, and actually giving assistance to the family of him who was at the head of commerce and one of the richest men in the country at that time, Don Pedro Abadia!"

He was much interested in hearing from his parents the details of their journey to Ohio in 1826, when they visited his brother Henry. "If any one had predicted, when father made his first journey there in 1801, that it might

become a pleasure jaunt for ladies, that person would have been thought cracked, at least."

He was also concerned by their account of his brother Henry, whose prospects were somewhat unpromising, and wrote:

"He certainly has an unusual capability for business, and I regret that he is not where he can exercise it. . . . It must be a heavy charge to have a growing family without more means than he possesses, and it will be very gratifying to me if I can aid in placing him in an eligible situation. Remember me affectionately to him and his family and say that on my return I shall not be long without making him a visit."

To his mother he says:

"I have just got out from England a nice camera lucida, a new invention for taking landscapes and figures with despatch and much precision, and I intend to add considerably to my collection of views in this neighborhood before I leave it, so you will

perceive the cares of business have not deprived me of my fondness for this favorite amusement; and will you be offended or think me frivolous if I tell you that I would like of all things a fine day's sport with my dog and gun by way of recreation after the tolerable spell of business I have had? This, you know, was a passion which began early with me, and, it is best to be candid, I believe it will last late. However, you will admit that I can lay it aside when business or duty bid. . . . But the clock strikes twelve, and reminds me it is bedtime."

The business prosperity of his firm was unabated, and his partners offered him flattering inducements to continue the partnership for at least another year; but he was firm in his resolution to return home at the earliest possible moment. To that end he closed his private affairs and made remittances of his funds, some to Gibraltar and England, but the greater part he proposed to carry with him in specie, gold and silver

bullion, coined silver, and sealskins. He speaks almost apologetically of his affairs to his father, "for not to tell you would be to deprive you of a pleasure."

Late at night, on the 28th of April, with only half an inch of candle remaining, he writes:

"You are aware that my copartnership expired on the 11 inst., and of course since that period I have had no connection with my former house, but, notwithstanding, the captains and supercargoes will not let me rest, and I have exactly the same direction in the new house that I had in the old, and though I wish it were otherwise it will unavoidably continue so while I am here. . . . Since my last we have had a dreadful earthquake. You can hardly form an idea of the horror of it, the ground rising and falling with undulations like the sea; houses and parts of houses falling; clouds of dust rising in all directions; people running naked into the streets, some screeching, others crying, and all beseeching for mercy. Such a scene I never wish to witness again.

Since the earthquake we were very nigh having another revolution, and there is no telling what dreadful consequences might have ensued had it taken effect. Do you wonder that I wish to get out of such a country where earthquakes and revolutions are of almost daily occurrence, to say nothing of numerous lesser evils?"

In a letter to his brother he gives an interesting narrative of his personal experience in this earthquake. He had risen at an early hour with the purpose of making a sketch from a lofty tower which commanded a fine view of the city and river at the end of a bridge crossing the Reimac. It could be reached only by long, dreary passages and various staircases and trapdoors in an old convent. While seated at his work in this dangerous position the trembling of the tower and the rumbling of the earthquake warned him of its approach. So sudden and violent was the shock that, leaving his sketch

and implements while the walls and roofs were falling about him, he had barely time to make a descent that was far from facile and escape through the ruins to the street. "He was afterwards so fortunate as to recover his unfinished sketch, which he completed under more favorable conditions, and it remains as an excellent view of the cathedral and an interesting memorial of the event."

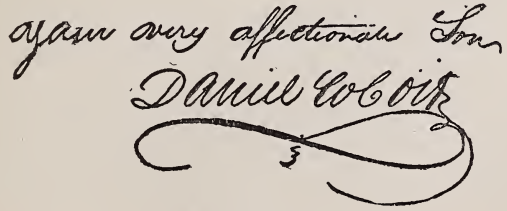
Early in June, 1828, he embarked at Lima in the "Danube," one of Goodhue & Co.'s ships, for New York, *via* Cape Horn, and took leave of South America forever. No seaman on a man-of-war in a foreign port ever saw the "homeward-bound pennant" at the royal masthead with greater joy.

An affectionate letter to his mother, especially interesting because it is personal, closes this narrative of his expe-

riences in South America and his ten years' absence from home:

"It now really seems like returning home in earnest, and perhaps when you receive, and may be reading, this I shall be already on the way. . . . You will not hesitate to believe me when I tell you what sensations agitate me when I reflect on the changes which a few months are likely to produce in my situation and happiness. The setting foot on my native land again, the meeting with old acquaintances, the embraces of the family, of you, my dear Mother. . . . Perhaps I ought to prepare you to expect considerable change in myself. I certainly have retained my hair and my teeth, but then time has committed its usual ravages. I have not made so many tedious voyages and journeys and passed through so many different climates without carrying in my face some marks of my cares and anxieties. . . . As to finding my habits or manners changed or assimilated to those of the people among whom I have been so long, that you need not expect. I am pretty clear in this respect and do not fear to be taken for a Spaniard.

. . . Although I shall retire from all direct interest with any house in the Pacific I shall maintain relations with several, and I have besides several important agencies offered me from which I expect a handsome and sure income without putting at hazard the property I have acquired which is itself sufficient for my reasonable wants, even supposing me as speaking as a man of family. When this last supposition will be realized I can at present form no idea; perhaps never; but do not think that I mean to despair, although I am an old bachelor. A good establishment has charms for those who have not one, and, I assure you, I do think a man of forty, yes, forty, with such is fully a match for one of thirty without. As I never expect to be thirty again you will allow me to say so. Will you present my best love to Elizabeth and her family, and believe me



His absence of more than ten years was a period of no little anxiety to his family in Norwich. His letters, at long intervals, gave intimations year after year of hairbreadth escapes from disastrous chances and moving accidents, but they left ample room for the imagination to conjure up worse calamities that might have befallen him. His father wrote:

"I am well aware that your situation and trials must have been arduous and perplexing, and I am concerned lest you shall be oppressed beyond your health and strength with the immense concerns on your hands. The wretched state of the government of Peru also causes anxiety for your personal safety and possible loss of property. The greatest caution, forecast, and watchfulness, in addition to constant application seem necessary in the management of such extensive concerns. You have, however, passed through the school of experience and have given good evidence that you have profited

by it, not only to your friends in this quarter of the world, but to the fast friends you have made abroad."

His sister Maria, speaking of their parents, says: "As respects their children they have but one wish ungratified. I need not say it is the return of their son. . . . We have the subject much at heart, and we hope the declining years of our parents will be cheered by having you soon among us." His happy return in health and prosperity in the month of November needed not the Governor's proclamation to make the family reunion an occasion of sincere thanksgiving; and it may well be believed that never were the tales of a traveler, illustrated with his own sketches, listened to with deeper interest.

He had already intimated that it might become expedient for him to go to London at an early day at the re-

quest of Mr. Huth, who desired to consult him in regard to his successors in Lima and the expediency of establishing a mercantile house in New York. The perils and dangers of the sea had no more terrors for him, as "in the present state of navigation the voyage to Europe is little more than a jaunt of pleasure!" Accordingly he sailed for London in May, 1829, much to the regret of his mother, whose maternal solicitude was not diminished by "a dream that he was dead, which made her gloomy all day." Inasmuch as he survived her by thirty years, her grandchildren regret that her undeviating sweetness and serenity were disturbed for a moment by the baseless fabric of a dream.

His father, who had made a study of the culture of silkworms, not only theoretically but by practical experiment, urged him to investigate the methods employed in Europe. He also desired

him to inform himself fully as to the cultivation of the grape and the making of wine in the countries through which he might pass. Some years later he did experiment with mulberry trees and silkworms, but with no more encouraging success than his father had twenty years earlier. It was demonstrated that silk could be produced, but not with a commercial profit at that time for lack of cheap labor. Whatever knowledge he acquired of grape culture he was enabled to make practically useful at a subsequent period in Norwich in his hot-houses. A connoisseur was heard to say that he doubted not for a moment that what Mr. Coit offered him was the pure juice of the grape, but however that might be it certainly was not wine! There is no reason to suppose that the making either of wine or of silk was long continued.

Mr. Coit's departure from New York

was made noteworthy by circumstances that can never occur again: four beautiful packet ships bound for European ports, beating down the bay within pistol-shot of each other, prepared, not for an ocean race, but for an "experiment" as to their sailing qualities! Great was the interest among the passengers for four-and-twenty hours, but as the wind increased, the Columbian — it seems almost superfluous to say that she was Mr. Coit's vessel — "walked away from the others and maintained the high reputation she had held as a first-rate ship for speed."

His stay in Europe was prolonged much beyond his expectation, a possible absence of one year being extended to three. It is to be regretted that a large portion of his journal kept during this interesting tour is missing, and that but few of his letters from the continent have been found, but existing letters

addressed to him by members of his family, especially by his sister Maria, an ever faithful and affectionate correspondent, indicate his travels in Scotland, Ireland, France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and on the Rhine. He enjoyed to the highest degree the works of art in these countries, and not only continued his agreeable pastime of sketching from nature, but pursued the study of art under the best teachers. His well-filled portfolios, and the valuable paintings by old masters which he purchased and sent home, afforded life-long pleasure to himself and his friends. Until his return they covered the walls of his sister Maria's house in New York and were much admired by many visitors. She speaks particularly of Murillo's "Holy Family" as "quite enchanting in a bright sunny morning," and of "Saint John with the lamb" as one of her special favorites.

"You have all witnessed," writes his brother, Joshua Coit, "your uncle's passion for sketching from nature which was one of the most enduring of his favorite pursuits. At one time he, together with Mr. Fisher, of Philadelphia, and Mr. Alleyn Otis, of Boston, both gentlemen of culture, made a tour through the borders of the Rhine, Switzerland, and Italy. They had their own carriage and stopped on their route at discretion. I was well acquainted with Mr. Otis, who used to take pleasure in telling me of the agreeable, companionable qualities of my brother, and of their interest in witnessing his zeal in this occupation. Hardly would they stop for rest or refreshment, when he would be off, sketch-book and pencil in hand, for an artistic point of view, and seldom failed to bring away a more or less finished sketch and memento of figure or landscape."

His father was deeply interested in his travels, and followed him as well as he could with "Moore's Travels in France and Italy," — "a pleasant writer, whose observations on the whole

appear sensible, natural, and amusing." Much as he desired his son's return, hoping he would "never again leave home for such a distant excursion," he nevertheless encouraged him to make the most of "an opportunity that probably would not occur again to lay up a stock of information not only as respects business, but of men and manners, from which to draw with satisfaction, delight, and amusement for a good while to come." With quiet humor he adds, "Should you pass over to Ireland and spend a few weeks among that people famed for their hospitality, steer clear of all mobs, riots, and so forth, and, finally, return in safety, you will find it an agreeable tour, and add much to your acquirements.

He spent the month of October, 1830, in Switzerland, and, "having done penance long enough in diligences and public carriages, exposed to the smoke

and vulgarity of disagreeable people, he bought a very strong but at the same time very good and handsome traveling carriage," that he might move about at his convenience, stopping when and where he pleased to make sketches, or to walk across country and climb mountains in search of picturesque effects. Rising with the sun to secure a view before continuing his journey, or leaving the dinner table to make a sketch from the window of the inn, or improving another opportunity before nightfall, he succeeded not infrequently in making at least two or three sketches in a day.

His journal on this tour, written in pencil at night when the impressions of what he had seen were still fresh, is free from the phrases of a guide book, and from any attempt at style, or "word painting," but is full of remarkably clear and definite descriptions exhibiting fine

discrimination and quick perceptions, enlivened, moreover, with humorous incidents of the day's travel. Had he been working for his bread and butter like a commercial traveler, he could not have been more indefatigable in his pursuit of the picturesque, "in this country where there was every requisite for a beautiful picture and a new one at every step."

Naturally he was impressed with the contrast between these scenes and those he was familiar with in South America. He says, "Nothing I have yet seen in Switzerland is to be compared with the dangers of some of the mountains of Peru and Chile." Nevertheless, after passing through "scenes from which Salvator Rosa himself might have caught an idea," in crossing the Gemmi with its frightful, precipitous galleries overhung with rocks, where he devoted two hours to making a sketch, "he felt

much satisfaction when emerging into the valley in thinking he was out of the reach of dangers that are after all more imaginary than real, something like that which one experiences after a good, hearty shock of earthquake."

The beautiful, the picturesque, always appealed to him more strongly than the awful and sublime.

"I have seen sufficient of the Alps to determine that the Andes are not to compare with them in point of beauty. I speak of course of such parts of the Andes as I have seen, having crossed them no less than five times in Peru and Chile. One marked and all important difference is that the Andes, at least in a great part of Chile and particularly in Peru, on the side of the Pacific are quite barren, hardly producing grass except in the higher parts, and no trees whatever, except fruit trees in the valleys. Even to their very base, they are nothing but rocks and sand, the pictures of dreariness and desolation.

On the contrary, nothing can be more

beautiful than the vegetation on these mountains. Wherever there is the least soil on the almost perpendicular ascents there are cultivations, or at least bushes and clumps of firs; indeed, whole groves of trees are sustained on the nearly perpendicular sides to an immense height in a manner truly surprising, so as constantly to attract your attention and call forth your admiration."

The traveler in his absence was not unmindful to gratify his sisters from time to time with such gifts as young ladies would especially appreciate, nor did he fail to remember generously his sister Maria's "Poor Widows' Society."

The alarming illness of his father while still suffering from a broken leg increased the anxiety of his mother and sisters for the traveler's return. Although not a murmur escaped his father's lips, his mother cried, "Oh, if Daniel were here what a support he would be to me."

His sister Maria wrote:

"My dear brother, when shall we see you back again? I begin to feel some of that impatience with which I waited your return from the Pacific. I have sometimes thought it a little strange considering our long separations and the little time we have spent together that my attachment should be so strong for you. But true it is that you are very dear to my heart, and I look forward to your return and to your residence among us as one of the most pleasing incidents of my future life."

His father wrote to Maria in June, 1832:

"We shall all be in readiness to receive your long-absent brother with open arms and hearts, which may Heaven grant in due time."

And his brother Joshua:

"Length of time and distance of place have by no means diminished the esteem and affection which all the members of the family possess for you."

That Mr. Coit at this time contemplated returning to Italy to continue the study of art, appears from a letter from Mrs. George M. Woolsey to Mrs. Perit. After speaking of the pleasure she and Mr. Woolsey had in seeing him in England, she continues:

"If my life is spared I shall hope to see him here again, but I have told him my hopes and wishes in regard to his future plans, and I hope he will profit by my hints. To see him here unaccompanied by any friend less dear than a sister I should regret, for I should then fear he would put his own plans into execution and return to Italy for the purpose of devoting himself to his favorite pursuit. This we must endeavor to prevent. We must persuade him of the fact that he can be more usefully and more happily engaged (even in this pursuit) in his own country."

Although it might have been late in life for a beginner to undertake the study of art as a profession, there can be

little doubt of Mr. Coit's success had he chosen to adopt it, for he was no novice. His interest in art continued through many years, and the skill he had acquired by unremitting practice with pencil and brush had already advanced him beyond the rank of amateurs.

At last, in July, 1832, the returned traveler had the happiness of finding his father in greatly improved health and of receiving a cordial welcome from an unbroken family circle. His winning and convincing manner in presenting business propositions to strangers we have already seen to be remarkable. Still more interesting is the firm hold he retained on the affection of all his family, notwithstanding the new attachments they had formed during his exile, which seems to prove the truth of the adage, "absence makes the heart grow fonder."

The summer of 1832 was the dreaded

cholera season in New York. As neither duty nor necessity compelled the brothers, Daniel and Joshua, to remain in the city, they spent some time under the elms, to the great gratification of their parents. Their mother wrote:

"Our dear sons are with us, and I think are enjoying themselves. Daniel has had two or three hunting excursions, quite in style, and, though he complains of dearth of game, has given us several nice dishes of wood cocks and partridges. Strawberries are abundant and a luxury for him. Joshua fills up the time with books. They have now gone to ride."

In November, 1833, a year after his return, occurred the death of his father, an event not wholly unexpected but the first break in the family circle, and his presence at that time was a great comfort to his bereaved mother.

His sister Maria, herself happily married, had more than once expressed her

desire to see him in the enjoyment of equal felicity. When he was in South America, hearing that a friend of his had married a Spanish woman, she felt "pretty confident that he would be content only with one of his own countrywomen." There are allusions to "Harriet," who had passed the day with her, and to "Harriet, the only daughter, a pleasant girl and quite a charming child." And again referring to her mother's wifely devotion, she says:

"Had you seen her I think even you would have acknowledged that a good wife is a valuable acquisition. How often have I wished you had such a treasure! I appreciate your domestic qualities too highly to feel satisfied with your leading a single life, and I mention the subject to you often, though selfishness might prompt to silence."

How far an intimacy was promoted by her gentle influence does not appear, but the autobiography informs us that

he "settled down as a married man" in September, 1834, when "Harriet Frances, daughter of Levi Coit, and granddaughter of Joseph Howland, both old merchants of New York," became his wife. Her mother, Lydia Howland Coit, was his own cousin.

The center of fashion in New York at that time was "above Bleecker Street," in the neighborhood of "the Parade Ground," as Washington Square was then called, and here the bridal pair made their home in Washington Place, near Broadway, which reached its extreme northern limit at Fourteenth Street, and here they were surrounded by a large circle of friends and cousins. Mr. Coit's early love of rural life and occupations was so far revived that after two years he bought an estate at New Rochelle, seventeen miles distant from the city, where he was as successful as of old in the cultivation of peaches and

pears. At New Rochelle were born his two elder children,—Elizabeth Bill and Charles Woolsey.

At a somewhat earlier period, October 25, 1833, an event occurred which afterwards proved to be of great importance. It is thus described in his brother Joshua's "Reminiscences":

"He went on a western tour for the purpose of grouse shooting, a variety of game which, under the name of prairie chickens, abounded in the then unsettled prairies of Michigan. He fell in with a commissioner of the United States who was engaged in locating some lands for the government offices and county seats in that state, then a territory. As the commissioner proved to be a brother sportsman, they partook of the pursuit of grouse together. In the course of the trip his companion told my brother he could not do better than invest a few thousand dollars in government lands in well selected sites, which would at least serve to

defray the expenses of his excursion. My brother thought favorably of the suggestion. He proceeded, however, as far as the rapids of Grand River, where he found an old French Indian trader, Campau by name, who had long before settled in the wilderness, and was the only landowner of note living there. He took great interest in my brother's skill in shooting and knowledge of wood craft, invited him to his house, pointed out the advantages the place had for settlement, aided him in selecting desirable land, and the result was he made extensive purchases there. The place was soon made the county seat; it has since become an important manufacturing town, and this shooting excursion thus led to a purchase which has become the main dependence of his family."

Uninterrupted prosperity through a long life is the lot of very few men of affairs, and Mr. Coit did not escape the calamities which prevailed throughout the country in the period since known as the hard times of 1837. The par-

ticular causes that led to his misfortunes need not here be inquired into. A few words from his autobiography tell all that we know:

"Unfortunately, in a few years I lost the property I had acquired abroad, and was under long-continued embarrassment. I will not enlarge on so unprofitable a subject; suffice it to say that I was glad to accept a proposition of my mother to take up my abode with her in the old family mansion, with little expectation that I should again be known in the haunts of business."

The summer of 1841 found him re-established with his wife and children under his mother's roof, the home of his boyhood, beginning life anew at the age of fifty-four, impoverished indeed, but with undaunted spirit and courage. With no less zeal than he had given to business interests involving millions, he now applied himself with all his might to the cultivation of his gardens and

orchards; and in this, as in all his affairs, acting on the maxim that "unceasing care and vigilance were the indispensable requisites of success," he soon established a reputation in the markets as a most successful producer of choice fruits and vegetables.

With patience and Christian fortitude he accepted a situation that would have been humiliating after his twice seven years of prosperity, his well-earned holiday in Europe, and the auspicious beginning of his married life, had he not been sustained by consciousness of his own integrity, by his naturally hopeful temperament, and by domestic happiness in his old home in the town he loved so well.

But on the whole, the years passed slowly, and his vision sought a wider horizon in the west where were alluring prospects of new fortunes. He made several excursions to the middle

western territories, then, only seventy years ago, a wilderness; and, among other ventures on the prairies of Iowa, beyond the Mississippi River, he began sheep-farming, in which he saw great prospective profits. More encouraging and more substantial was the gradual development of his property at Grand Rapids, which, though at times a heavy burden, he was fortunately able to retain. In his quiet retirement under the elms he found abundant occupation; he welcomed his friends and relatives with courtly hospitality, and maintained constant interest in the welfare and prosperity of the church in the "first parish," which he had joined, and in its Sunday-school.

Edmund Clarence Stedman, who warmly encouraged the writing of this memoir, shortly before his death furnished this little memory picture of Mr. Coit after more than sixty years:

"How fine to have those letters by my dear old Sunday School teacher, Mr. D. W. Coit! I say *old*, but of course I must be a score of years the senior of that affectionately delightful, travelled Mentor, at the age when he made even Puritanism attractive to me. I prized, too, the visits to his house on the hill, where he showed me drawings — my first glimpses of art — and told wondrous tales of moneys gained in South America, and necessarily brought away by stratagem. I must then have been about twelve or thirteen, say 1845–6, and I clearly remember that he went to Mexico afterwards, to recruit his fortune, and that he of course came back in time with another sackful of melted silver. His story would make a winsome book for young or old."

It is not strange that in his letters to his wife in these repeated western journeys he was always solicitous for her health and happiness and for the welfare of their children. That was to be expected of course, but most interesting and characteristic are his minute direc-

tions in regard to the garden and fruit orchard; how the strawberry beds shall be treated; when certain melons shall be picked and brought in to ripen on a particular shelf in a sunny window; where the ruta-bagas shall be planted; and the special attention that shall be given to a certain tree on which is a graft with only three pears that must be nearly ripe and must be carefully picked by hand and kept until his return.

These journeys to the western country gave him the opportunity he had long desired of visiting his brother Henry at his home near Cleveland, Ohio.

The contrast in the interesting careers of the two brothers is specially noteworthy.

Daniel, as has been seen, thoroughly trained to scrupulous exactness in vast

business enterprises; bold but cautious; able to direct large affairs, while attentive to details; inured to hardship on the land and on the sea, yet retaining the hand and perceptions of an artist; capable of roughing it in the Andes with Spanish herdsmen and muleteers, and of meeting on even terms bankers and merchants of distinction, was equally at home in his orchard and in the brilliant capitals of Europe.

Henry, amiable, affectionate, generous, early established in domestic life on his father's lands in the Western Reserve, — the so-called "Land of Promise," the land of great expectations and of great disappointments, — widely separated from his parents and brothers and sisters, and from the home of his boyhood; a fast friend, a good neighbor, a useful citizen; always enterprising and always hopeful, endured hardships and privations in the wilderness undismayed

by the inevitable reverses that are the fate of all pioneer settlers.

Unlike as the brothers were in their environment and manner of life, they were alike in their devotion to those to whom they were specially bound by ties of kindred and affection, in their strict integrity, and in their loyalty to the principles of true virtue and godliness of living in which they had been nurtured in their childhood.

They were alike also in their fondness for out-of-doors avocations, and in their gardens and fruit yards they found, with Lord Bacon, "the purest of human pleasures, and the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man." No new variety of fruit or improved method of cultivation ever escaped their watchful eyes.

A sister of theirs who inherited the same family trait had in the backyard of her city house a grapevine which she had grown from a cutting secured

from her next neighbor. The elder brother, visiting her, said: "Sister, I see you have a promising young grapevine, but it has not been well trimmed. If you will allow me I will take my knife and cut away all the old wood, and the result will be more and better grapes." "Certainly, brother," she said, "I shall be glad to have you do what you think best." A few months later came the younger brother, with critical eye, and said: "Sister, I was sorry to see that your grapevine — an Isabella, I believe — had been neglected and needed trimming. I have taken the liberty of cutting away all the old wood, and now I think you will find it greatly improved." She said, "Thank you very much, brother." But the younger generation never ceased to wonder where the grapes would come from if *all the old wood* was cut away twice in one year.

The revolving wheel of fortune, in January, 1848, opened a new chapter in the life of Mr. Coit not less interesting than those that had preceded it. In response to a telegraphic invitation from his friends and kinsmen, Howland & Aspinwall, he left his home at short notice to engage in a confidential financial enterprise in their behalf in the city of Mexico, and embarked in a sailing vessel for Vera Cruz by way of the island of Jamaica. The voyage of thirty days was so long and tedious that, notwithstanding his experience on the ocean, he was never so miserable on shipboard before. Attempting to describe the wretchedness of the situation, he says: "Oh, how fatiguing, how nauseating, how every way unpleasant, is a long, hard gale at sea!" On a Sunday, the worst day of all, he remained in his berth, and, as many a traveler has done, derived such comfort as he could from

the one hundred and seventh psalm, "They that go down to the sea in ships"; but he did not find even that a sovereign remedy.

His journey over two hundred miles on horseback from Vera Cruz to Mexico was perilous on account of the lawless bands of guerrillas that infested the road; but having provided himself with a suitable horse, a Mexican saddle, blankets, and accoutrements, he set off "quite *a la Spagnole*." "This used to be very pleasant," he adds, "but I assure you there is no longer the least romance about it at all." By powerful influence he was enabled to attach himself to a government train of about eighty four-horse army wagons carrying supplies to the capital under an escort of two hundred soldiers. The annoyances and perplexities, the nameless horrors he now experienced, not only in the inevitable discomforts of the road, but in the com-

pany of dissolute and blasphemous troops and wagoners from whom escape was impossible, made his expedition over the South American cordilleras seem in comparison like a pleasure trip.

The fatiguing journey was interrupted by a short stay at Jalapa, where it was once more his good fortune to renew his acquaintance with one of his former friends in Lima, a Mr. Kennedy, by whom he was hospitably entertained.

The city of Mexico at the time of his arrival was occupied by the victorious army of the United States under General Winfield Scott. An armistice had been concluded, and as the troops were comparatively idle pending the signing of the treaty of peace, disorder and vice were prevalent in the city to a degree that exceeded anything that he had ever seen either in South America or in Europe.

Not long after his arrival he witnessed the evacuation of Mexico by General Scott's army with imposing ceremonies, exchange of salutes, and all the honors of war. He said he was never so homesick in his life and wished he could go home also.

"I would gladly turn my face tomorrow towards old, unpretending Norwich rather than to the finest city the world has to boast of, not excepting this far famed city of the Montezumas. . . . I find a vast difference in my feelings and views now from what existed in my former travels; there was a compensation then, in being absent from one's country and family, but nothing whatever abroad can now make any tolerable amends for absence from wife, family and home, though my duty regarding pecuniary considerations renders it necessary for me to be yet some time absent. . . .

"Taking into view all the encomiums I had heard of this city I expected to find it very superior to Lima; it is larger and somewhat better built; there are more large

and showy streets and houses, but neither the climate nor the location are, in my view, equal to those of Lima, and the morals and general character of the people are, I think, decidedly worse."

His financial and commercial business in Mexico consisted in negotiating drafts and making remittances, and was conducted through the firm of William Drusina & Co. in whose house he had comfortable lodgings and through whom he was introduced to the most agreeable society, both of Mexicans and foreigners, that the city afforded.

In Mexico, his knowledge of the Spanish language, which had grown rusty, came back to him, and, much to his advantage, he could soon "speak it famously."

In October, 1848, having "still two long months, long in prospective, to look forward to," he quoted Young's "Night Thoughts" on the slow ap-

proach of "Time, creeping decrepit with his age," and anticipated his speedy return home on "broad pinions swifter than the wind." He goes on to say:

"To tell you the truth, however, my time does not pass either unprofitably or disagreeably, and, with the exception of separation from you, which is, to be sure, a sad drawback, I may say, pleasantly. I have the satisfaction of reflecting that I am accomplishing something substantial for your benefit at very little cost of labor, while my leisure moments are usefully occupied with the pencil in illustrating this celebrated city and its neighborhood in a manner which, so far as I know, has not been before attempted, and which may result in considerable pecuniary advantage."

The sketches that he made at this time, more than thirty in number, are of peculiar value and interest, not only as faithful representations of the scenes that were before him, but as examples

of the artistic perception which enabled him to select for his pencil, almost instinctively, the best points of view for picturesque effects whether of buildings or of landscapes. He had indeed rare skill, such as few amateurs possess, in an art which, since the advent of photographic cameras, is becoming one of the lost arts.

Continuing to speak of his sketches, shortly before leaving Mexico he wrote:

"I get a drive occasionally to one or other of the villages in this neighborhood. They originated in the time of the Spaniards and great wealth was bestowed on large churches and convents with extensive gardens and orchards. The houses are built of corresponding size and architecture, enclosing one or more courts filled with orange, lemon, and other ornamental trees and shrubbery and fountains in the center. One of my last sketches was of a court of this kind. It is one of the smallest but every foot of it is

occupied with objects of interest, and it is a perfect little gem of itself. It has been a laborious thing to sketch and much more to fill up afterwards with so much detail, but as it is different from anything we have, I think it will please, and pay for the trouble. . . .

"I shall probably send home my sketches ere I leave for the west coast with some curiosities and paintings I have succeeded in obtaining, the most curious of which are a set of rich tapestry hangings, originally sent by the King of Spain to a rich Mexican as a return for a large amount of bars of silver he had sent the King. The subjects are very humorous, representing the most amusing passages in the life of Don Quixote. . . .

There are seven of these hangings, quite large; the largest, some eighteen feet long, by nine or ten feet in height. . . . They are in the worst possible condition to be seen, and those who know nothing about them, and how far they are capable with proper treatment of being restored, would, I well know be much inclined to turn up their noses and pronounce them rubbish. They

are also broken in many places, and are more or less faded; but all this is capable of being remedied to a considerable degree. . . . They came into my possession in a curious way, as you shall hear some day. . . . The paintings, also, are in a very bad state, though capable of restoration."

Twenty-five years later, when he was in his eighty-eighth year, he told the story in a letter to his cousin, Mrs. George C. Ripley of Minneapolis, which, happily, has been preserved to this day.

NORWICH, May 13, 1875.

MY DEAR COUSIN, — I acknowledge with pleasure your note of Saturday last in which you ask for some "historical points" in regard to the tapestries which I possess. . . . I have no doubt a very pretty story might be constructed out of their lives, and that, without infringing upon strict truthfulness. . . . Their checkered history involves in its course stranger vicissitudes than ever happened to their like before. Fancy them in all their early freshness and beauty, adorn-

ing the walls of the palace at Madrid, or perhaps the Escurial, throwing into shadow for the moment the wonderful productions of Murillo and others of the most celebrated masters of art. . . . How long they maintained this high elevation we cannot tell; it might have been for a hundred years, or it might have been not half that period, but certain it is, the day of their decadence had at length arrived, and now comes in the history of my acquaintance with them and finally my possession of them.

You have doubtless heard of a visit I made to the city of Mexico some twenty-five years ago. Now it has always been my custom wherever I have been in the Spanish cities of America, to be looking about if by any chance I might stumble upon an original picture by one of the old masters which were known to have been formerly sent from Spain for the use of the churches. It so happened that in one of these searches I entered into a painter's shop, a large lofty apartment, where to my great surprise I found the rough walls adorned with these rare and beautiful creations of art. . . . Of course I enquired what

strange circumstance had brought them into this queer place, when the following history was given me.

Some rich person (I think the head of a noble family) had rendered important services to the King of Spain, and these tapestries were sent as a testimonial of his appreciation of those services. This rich man died, and so little importance was attached to the tapestries, that by some strange freak they fell into the hands of the Padre, or priest of the family, and by him they were transferred to my friend the painter.

I had some other transactions with him, and frequently visited the place for my gratification, never dreaming of becoming the purchaser of articles so valuable (I had been told a valuation of $7000 had been put upon them), when one day the painter dropped in upon me to ask a favor: he was much pressed for a little ready cash, and if I would accommodate him he would deposit in my hands as security a couple of these tapestries. Of course I did so, and it was not many days before the request was repeated with the same result, and now it flashed upon my

mind that they would eventually be mine, and so it was. A proposition soon came to me which I gladly embraced, and thus you have the history of the tapestries so far as I know.

Pray excuse the delay in replying to your request, and believe me,

Affectionately yours,

D. W. Coit.

If this is partly conjecture, it is nevertheless a very pretty story as it stands, and may it not be asserted with confidence that invention is the mother of history?

At the close of the year 1848, when his engagement with Howland & Aspinwall was about to expire, and he was looking homeward with longing eyes, he, and indeed the whole world, was astounded with reports that seemed almost chimerical of the discovery of gold in California. After vain endeav-

ors to persuade his friends in New York to undertake a new enterprise with him in California, he closed with a proposal made by Mr. Drusina, with whom he was then on terms of friendly intimacy, to proceed overland to the Pacific coast and thence by steamer to San Francisco with a view of purchasing gold dust which the miners would willingly exchange at less than its value for silver coin that was readily convertible into the necessaries of life.

In this business he and Mr. Drusina were representatives of the Rothschilds, the eminent European bankers, and as such were supplied with ample capital and credit. Mr. Coit was to receive a liberal commission on all purchases and shipments, and the prospect thus presented to him of realizing a comfortable fortune was so flattering that he had no alternative but to accept it. His disappointment was great, however, that his

friends in New York would not engage with him in this business, which, he believed, would be profitable, and he thus wrote to his wife:

"When I received my discouraging letters from the house, all my bright plans and prospects appeared for the moment blasted, and I had, I assure you, the most gloomy day I have experienced since I have been in Mexico; but what short sighted beings we are! We never can see much beyond the length of our noses, and often when appearances are most unfavorable they are working for our ultimate good. I passed as I have said a very dull day, but called on Mr. Drusina the following morning and told him the course the business had taken. Perhaps he saw that I looked more sober than usual, for he said, 'you know I am very busy, and until I get off my packet letters I can say nothing, but just write to Mrs. Coit in general terms, that you will still be able to carry out your views with no loss to your prospects!' Was not this noble, and is there not besides, this pleasant reflection in it, aside from any

pecuniary consideration, that the moment almost that I leave my humble retirement, and, without any means, am thrown among strangers, I am able to form friendships and inspire confidence such as the foregoing indicates? Still, my dear wife, I have learned to look with distrust on all brilliant prospects, and, even now, in this matter which puts on so bright an appearance, I may from some unexpected cause meet disappointment; but as it appears clearly the leading of a kind providence so it should be received and acted upon; yet if a change comes over my prospects I hope you will not find me downcast and disheartened."

Early in March, 1849, after some delay, but with short notice at the last, he left Mexico with a party of eighteen besides muleteers, all mounted and fully armed, for the ride of five hundred miles to San Blas on the western coast. The journey was not without inconveniences, such as sleeping on the ground in the open air, and especially from the fa-

tigue of being in the saddle at midday under a blazing sun; but he was not a novice and could not see but he bore fatigue as well as the others, though he had never realized his age so much as on this occasion when he was treated with all the consideration and respect he could desire as the father of the party. He did not lose the opportunity to record with his pencil some of the interesting objects on the route.

Arriving in San Francisco, the new Eldorado, by steamer after a voyage of seven days, repeating his former experiences, Mr. Coit again found himself in a novel environment, among strangers, far from home, in perilous times, and was enrolled as one of the modern Argonauts and an "original forty-niner." Information received in Mexico had prepared him to find that the people of the United States were "beside themselves on this California gold business."

Multitudes, deluded by the vain hope of growing rich in a day, poured into California by the overland route, by the isthmus, or by the long voyage round Cape Horn. All means of transportation for those coming or returning were overcrowded; the prices of all commodities were inordinately high; and thousands of disappointed adventurers, stricken with disease, and left penniless, without shelter, food, or clothing, were unable to return to their homes.

There was, of course, another side to this picture of disappointment and suffering among the pioneer gold hunters, and Mr. Coit names as examples, among many successful ones, some of his own acquaintances who by good luck in the "diggings" had drawn prizes in the lottery, or by wise foresight in buying land and building houses, had in a short time acquired fortunes that were regarded as very large; yet it remained

true that in the scheme of the California lottery there were a few brilliant prizes, and many smaller ones, but that the greater number were blanks.

Mr. Coit's habits of prudence, temperance, and self-control, strengthened by his years, his experience in time of danger and disturbance, and by his sense of moral and religious obligation, kept him clear from the manifold misfortunes and pitfalls that entrapped and ruined multitudes of men, both the young and the old.

Among those who had been fortunate in the gold fields, or lucky in speculation or gambling, vice and dissipation of all kinds were prevalent. In the absence of an efficient government and adequate police protection, desperadoes and lewd fellows of the baser sort, fearing not God and regarding not man, not only menaced — they

outraged the property, the persons, and the lives of peaceable citizens.

In the summer of 1849 lawlessness and open violence by bands of ruffians, calling themselves "hounds" or "regulators," had increased to such an extent that a reign of terror prevailed. As the police were incompetent to quell the disturbance the respectable citizens, almost to a man, organized themselves as a committee of safety for self-defense, patroled the streets day and night with armed men, hunted down and arrested the marauders, established a criminal court with a judge and jury, and executed summary justice until safety and order could be restored. These measures for self-protection, though without the sanction of the law, commended themselves to right-minded men as entirely justifiable under the then existing circumstances, and were vindicated by the results.

Mr. Coit yielded to no temptation to engage in speculations, but confined himself strictly to his own business, which, while it imposed grave responsibilities, left him leisure to increase the number of his sketches that are now valuable as historical records of the early days of San Francisco. He lived a retired life, and as economically as was possible when the prices for even small articles in daily use were enormous. Milk, for example, was seventy-five cents a quart; washing, six dollars a dozen; common laborers demanded six dollars a day; a woman, "to oblige," charged twenty-five cents a yard for running up seams of cotton cloth, but could afford to do no more at the price! Clothing, food, and rent were high in proportion.

The town was a great tinder-box, with no protection whatever against fire, so that Mr. Coit was in constant

dread of a general conflagration, which after a few months came, and, thrice repeated, brought ruin to hundreds of merchants.

Altogether, the lot of a "forty-niner," especially if he desired to do his business in peace and quietness, was not a happy one. There was no congenial society. Tidings from home were infrequent, and the mails from the Atlantic coast, coming but once a month, were long on the route. On August 21 Mr. Coit reported the mail as arrived, and "after waiting two days and making sundry useless efforts to get through the throng pressing about the post-office for letters, I have at last succeeded in getting yours of June 25, with the best of news, that you are all well!" Almost sixty days from Norwich!

At about the same time he wrote to Mr. Gilman:

"I had the pleasure to receive per last steamer your favor of June 28, enclosing a most unexpected letter from my sister Kingsley, and no less gratifying than unexpected, informing me of the improved state of her health, and that Mr. Kingsley and the children were in the enjoyment of that greatest of blessings. I have replied to her, and as it occurs to me that sister Eliza and the girls may be interested in a brief account of the strange and unexampled state of things here I leave the letter open for their perusal. . . . Tell them that my thoughts and affections turn more than ever towards home, and that I trust, with the blessing of a kind and watchful providence we may meet again ere long, bound to one another by stronger ties than ever."

Almost all of his letters conveyed salutations and greetings to his friends and kinsmen, mentioning them by name, as in the following:

"Remember me to neighbor Thomas; tell him to hold on a little longer and he will

see me again at my old stand in the garden and fruit yard, and further that I shall have a good long yarn to spin for him. Remember me also to George and Hannah Ripley, and tell George I shall be right glad to take him by the hand again one of these days, not very remote, I trust. My love to my dear Aunt Lathrop, also to dear cousin Mary Ann Woodhull and Elizabeth."

His own concerns prospered, and in May, 1850, he wrote to his wife as follows:

"It is gratifying to perceive that the prompt manner in which the business entrusted to me has been conducted is now somewhat more advantageous than in the early days of my being here. It is further gratifying to reflect that in the rather large transactions for my Mexican friends the past year, not only has no fault or objection been made, but the most entire satisfaction expressed; neither has the smallest error occurred in my accounts rendered.

"Indeed, I should have filled the station

of principal for so long a mercantile life to little purpose were I now unable to perform the duties of an *agent* with tact and efficiency. I nust tell you that I now consider it exceedingly fortunate that my friends in New York did not accept the proposition I made to them. It would have involved me in great responsibilities, given me hard labor with many annoyances, and the uncertainty of giving satisfaction.

"As it is, I am entirely my own master, which, with one of my age and habits, is something, at least; and then I have an exceedingly easy position as to labor, with no responsibilities that I am unequal to or afraid to grapple with; while in a pecuniary point of view I certainly have lost nothing."

The letters that he received at this time from his friends in Mexico were of unusual interest, covering, as he wrote, bills of lading of $70,000 in gold and silver coin to his address, making him the largest consignee on the steamer's manifest. He goes on to say:

"What a strange, eventful life this of mine has been! Do you not sometimes think so, dearest? And the last chapter in it is the most strange of all! But little more than two years ago, long retired from all intercourse with men of business, and lost sight of, or, if thought of, perhaps considered incompetent, or already too old for an active life; without credit or property, or comparatively none; submitting rather from necessity than choice to much irksome toil and labor to which I was unaccustomed, and now how changed! Enjoying the unlimited confidence of mercantile houses of very high standing in the world whose acquaintance is quite recent and accidental, among others the Rothschilds; with the control of large specie funds, and credits on different parts of the world; handling gold coin and gold dust with as much *sang froid* as I did my garden seeds a little time ago! I say, are not these rapid changes and contrasts truly astonishing? How wonderfully has an ever presiding and gracious providence watched over me and directed all my footsteps for good!"

In the first year of his residence in San Francisco the church buildings were of the most primitive construction, scarcely more than rough sheds; but he continued his habit of regular attendance on public worship, giving the preference from associations at home to the Congregational church, but finding on the whole greater satisfaction in the Episcopal church, where he listened to —

"capital sermons from the Reverend Flavel S. Mines, whom I have been much in the habit of going to hear of late. The fact is, I feel a little more at liberty to do so here than I should at home, and I go where I can hear the best preaching, and be most edified and instructed. He is one of the most uniformly impressive and orthodox preachers, as an Episcopalian, I have ever heard."

In January, 1851, he wrote:

"My health here has been uniformly good. I don't know how frequently it has

been remarked within the last six months, 'Why, how well you are looking!' This, it will be observed, is to a person on the wrong side of sixty."

His pleasant intercourse in Liverpool with his relations, Mr. and Mrs. George M. Woolsey, has already been referred to. In September, 1851, he wrote to his wife:

"So your uncle Woolsey has been taken from us. I saw it was to be so, and your letter did not greatly surprise me, though it makes me sad to think that I shall no more see him and enjoy his refined society and gentlemanly hospitality, which very few indeed have the knowledge and the tact, and at the same time the means, to make so delightfully agreeable, as he had, though the mantle of the father seems to have fallen on the son."

It was not to be expected that the business of buying gold dust could long continue to be profitable. As more

coined money came into circulation prices inevitably equalized themselves; and such stories as that of Indians giving for Spanish silver dollars their weight in gold dust (sixteen to one), or even of gold dust being sold for eight silver dollars an ounce troy, came to be regarded as fabulous.

By this time Mr. Coit had acquired sufficient capital to enable him to engage for his own account in business, the details of which are not disclosed in his letters, for long experience had taught him the wisdom of keeping his own counsel in several different languages. Even to his wife, under injunctions of secrecy, he did not reveal all that he was doing. But there is no doubt that he made considerable investments in buildings and land. In March, 1851, he wrote:

"I am now daily looking for the arrival of certain iron ware houses which were or-

dered from England more than a year ago. They were planned by me for certain friends of mine who propose to erect them as soon as they arrive. They are very large, entirely of iron, and, of course, fire proof, and when put up will be the most extensive and commodious buildings for storage that exist here. It is this business that is keeping me here, and until it is finally disposed of, I mean turned over to other parties, I cannot leave."

In these buildings, which arrived and were erected in the ensuing summer, and in the lands and wharves connected with them, Mr. Coit had a quarter interest. As they were immediately rented at the rate of $96,000 per annum, at which rate they would pay for themselves in a short time, the investment promised to be highly profitable. Although they were believed to be fireproof, care was taken to erect the structures beyond the line of exposure from such great conflagrations as had already visited San Francisco. But in avoiding

one danger another was incurred, for the sand-bluffs on which they were built, like the sand in the parable, were an unstable foundation, and when the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon them, they fell, and great was the fall thereof. Mr. Coit suffered some loss and was disappointed in his expectations, and being satisfied with what he had gained from other sources, did not care to remain to repeat the experiment. He therefore closed his interests in California, and to the great joy of his wife, his children, and his friends, after an absence of more than four years, returned to his home in Norwich in the summer of 1852.

The following letter to his wife closes the story of his life in California:

San Francisco, Sept. 13, 1851.

"Libby's nice little note [his daughter, Elizabeth, aged fourteen years] was very

gratifying, though I must tell her I don't quite approve of writing letters that have so many miles to go on note-paper. A good honest sheet of letter paper would be more to the purpose. By the by, her hand writing is forming very prettily indeed. I have seen nothing like this before.

I hope she had a nice visit in New London. I remember perfectly the first visit I made there when very much younger than she is, with my father and mother in the chaise with the little bobtail mare, when it took half a day to drive there over a hilly road.

I am glad you speak so highly of our New London cousins [the families of Robert Coit, and Mrs. Nancy Coit Learned], and that you are disposed to keep alive your intercourse by frequent interchange of visits."

That Mr. Coit was gratified to hear twenty years after his return that his early sketches were still appreciated in San Francisco appears by the following letter to his sister:

"I don't know whether you are aware that when Daniel Gilman left here to go to San Francisco I put into his hands a number of pencil drawings of that city and its surroundings which I had taken with some degree of care when I was there, and of course in its very early history. Well, I have recently received from Daniel a most enthusiastic account of the reception of these drawings. They were admitted on all hands, by those most capable of judging, as being perfectly true and withall valuable; nothing short of his letter will give you any proper idea of the estimation in which they were held; I sent the letter to Harriet, but I can give you, till you have an opportunity of seeing that, *The San Francisco Bulletin*, which has an article sufficiently minute and commendatory of them."

The reader of these pages is now familiar with "some of the incidents of an eventful life," not the least remarkable of which was Mr. Coit's experience in Mexico and California. Few men

past the age of sixty make a hazard of new fortunes in a strange country as successfully as he did. Fewer still, after the vicissitudes of a strenuous life, are permitted for nearly a quarter of a century to "rest and stand in their lot to the end of their days."

In the chances and changes of his business career, and as a great traveler, he had suffered many things on the land and on the deep. He had seen the most sublime scenery of Switzerland and South America, and the masterpieces of art in the galleries of Europe. He had lived for years amid scenes of political turmoil and violence and of disastrous earthquakes and conflagrations. Foreign travel had no longer any attractions for him, and having reached the haven to which he had long looked forward, he was contented at last in the halcyon days of peace and tranquillity to say, as his father had said forty years

before, "Norwich remains a more suitable residence for the old than for the young whose enjoyment is in action, but at my time of life quiet and ease constitute the principal part of my enjoyment."

But in his retirement he was by no means idle or inactive. On the contrary, having increased means, he engaged with enthusiasm in the improvement of the family mansion, its gardens and its meadows, and in the erection of glass houses for fruits and flowers. In these houses he might be found in winter regulating their temperature, and exposure to sun and light; and when he was well advanced in years he was a familiar figure on a summer day superintending his garden work, sheltered by a broad-brimmed Panama hat that he had brought from Mexico, or delving like banished Adam in the soil with his

own hands. Coming into the house for a brief rest he responded quickly to slight refreshment, and then, after returning to his occupation, he would reappear, immaculate, at dinner time, prepared for its full enjoyment.

He paid liberal wages and expected faithful service, but for a lazy man or a shirk he had no use. Going to his garden one morning he found a man whom he hired by the day comfortably resting under a convenient tree. As Mr. Coit approached hastily and with some indignation, the man said, "I saw you coming, sir, but I did not go to work; it is a very hot day, and I was tired." Said Mr. Coit, in telling this story, "I respected that man. Had he picked up his spade and gone to work my feelings would have been very different!" This fairly illustrates Mr. Coit's disposition. He knew his rights and could maintain them; but he could make allowances

for human weakness, and was charitable and lenient when a failure or an error was acknowledged.

He cultivated choice fruits for pleasure rather than for profit, and used to say that he should be quite satisfied if cash returns equaled the amount of his coal bills. It is quite safe to believe that they never did, but in such pursuits he found abundant and agreeable occupation. He tested and tasted different varieties of peaches and pears and grapes with as much discrimination as a connoisseur might bestow on rare old wines, and it is needless to say that his table was abundantly supplied with the choicest productions of his orchard and hothouses. He desired to have his guests participate in his enjoyment of them, and if the uneducated palates of his younger friends made them wish for one whole pear that they knew by sight and by name

rather than samples of a dozen that they knew not of, they could not complain of a lack of generous hospitality.

Another source of unceasing pleasure to the end of his days was in the sketches and drawings he had made in South America, Europe, Mexico, and California. When house-bound or shut in, the time passed quickly while he was arranging and finishing them, and using them as illustrations he became eloquent in describing the places and scenes he had visited.

The paintings, also, that he had brought from foreign lands and that adorned his walls gave him continual enjoyment. They could be fully appreciated by those only who, like himself, had carefully studied the works of the old masters, but he watched with keen interest their renovation under the hands of an artist skilled in such work,

— an eccentric Dutchman, — who spent two summers under his roof for that purpose, and was not less enthusiastic than Mr. Coit in admiration of them.

In 1848, while he was in Mexico, he had heard with sorrow from his wife of the death of their little daughter, whom he had left when she was but a few months old; and again, after fourteen years they were deeply grieved by the death of their daughter Elizabeth, the wife of the Reverend H. C. Haydn. After a year of married life she passed away, leaving an infant daughter who bears her name and was ever regarded with twofold affection by her devoted grandparents.

Yet again, three years later, in 1865, his son Daniel became the victim of disease contracted in the service of the Sanitary Commission in the War for the Union.

On a severely cold night early in 1865 Mr. Coit and his family were aroused by fire in their dwelling. While only half clad and almost suffocated with smoke, notwithstanding his nearly four-score years, he fought the flames with the good judgment and intrepidity of a veteran fireman.

Among the burned contents of the house was the "Panama hat" that we have already seen in the garden. Mr. Coit prized it as the gift of a friend, and although the old Mutual Assurance Society did not pay for sentiment it could not deny that its remarkably fine texture gave it the unusual value, if tradition may be believed, of one hundred dollars.

Greatly to the gratification of Mr. Coit and his wife, his sister Eliza (Mrs. Gilman) and her daughters coming to Norwich from New York in 1864 made

their home near his residence, and affectionate, intimate intercourse between the families enhanced the happiness of both households.

Although Mr. Coit took no active part in politics, and never held political office, he was always an interested observer of affairs of the town and the nation, and especially of the course of events before and during the War for the Union in which his two sons, graduates of Yale College, served their country with honor, — Charles Woolsey, the elder, in the Christian Commission, and Daniel Lathrop, in the Sanitary Commission.

Mr. Coit's charities were free from ostentation, yet he hesitated not to give his name and influence to promote a good cause; as in 1875, when he wrote and signed with his own hand a subscription paper in behalf of an unfortunate neighbor who was in danger of

losing all he had by the foreclosure of a mortgage. He was a regular attendant upon public worship, a liberal supporter of the church of which he was a member, a loyal friend of its ministers, and by his quiet influence encouraged every effort for the repression of wickedness and vice and the maintenance of true religion and virtue.

He never spoke publicly of his personal religious convictions, and seldom, if ever, so far as is known, in private, but he was a truly devout man, scrupulously conscientious in the discharge of his duty in all the relations of life. In his later years he was accustomed to read the scriptures and prayers at family worship. On one occasion, before beginning his devotions, he assured his family of his sincere affection, which, indeed, they never had reason to doubt, and with considerable emotion expressed

his sorrow for his occasional impatience and sharp criticism of small, juvenile improprieties which naturally were annoying to one who was by many years the senior of his children. The incident revealed his heart, and, as one who was present testifies, was truly affecting. Love for them made him solicitous that their lives and manners should be in accordance with the high ideals by which he had long governed his own life. Not every man would have yielded so far to the impulses of a warm heart.

If he was punctiliously exact in his dealings with others, he demanded from them no more than he rendered himself, and so far from being censorious or quick to take offense he was ready to attribute any lack of courtesy or propriety to ignorance or oversight.

Few, if any, are now living on earth who remember hearing Mr. Coit say

much about the "incidents of his eventful life." Although he was always kind and friendly with the younger generation, by reason of his age he seemed to them very superior and remote, — far more interested in the present than in the past; in his pears and peaches than in his adventures in the Alps and the Andes. Sometimes, however, though not very often, when he was found with his portfolio open, taking one of his drawings as a text he grew eloquent in discoursing on the scene; and no one who ever heard him tell of the wonderful sagacity of his favorite pointer dog, "Don," could forget the vivacity with which he told the story.

His eldest niece, Elizabeth Gilman (Mrs. Thompson), who had pleasant recollections of him, wrote from Berlin in 1877 as follows:

"Probably no one remembers more — I mean among the nephews and nieces — than

I, of our dear uncle Daniel, of his delicate tastes, his perceptions of everything beautiful, his kindness and generosity to all around, and, in later years, in his quiet retired life there was a peculiar charm in his society. My husband used greatly to enjoy his evening visits on the doorsteps under the big trees in conversation upon old times and the present with one who had been such a careful observer through a long life."

Another quotation from his brother's "Reminiscences" is interesting:

"One point I cannot omit to allude to. I refer to his uncommon facility, clearness and vivacity in narration, whether orally or in his letters; some of which I hope his son Charles may be able to get together in a form that may be permanent. Not inclined to be garrulous, and never boastful or egotistical, it was not difficult, in the family circle, to direct his attention to some of the many scenes of life and adventure through which he had passed.

"His observation was discriminating and accurate, his memory retentive and his power

of description lively and picturesque. He kindled with warmth and enthusiasm in recalling the scenes and adventures of former days and of remote countries. Whether of shooting in the stubble fields of New Jersey, and in the prairies of the West, — whether in the picture galleries and among the artists of Europe, — whether in his toilsome travels over the Pampas and across the Andes of South America, — whether of perils among the giddy passes of the Cordilleras and among the wild tribes now occupying the ruined cities of the Incas, — whether of escapes from the earthquakes he encountered during his long residence in the volcanic regions of Peru, and from mutinous crews on board the treasure ships of which he had charge, — whether among the stirring events in our conquest and occupation of Mexico, and with the adventurers and desperadoes among the early settlers and gold hunters of California, — or whether amid the tranquil and domestic occupations of his later years, literally under his own vine and his own fig-trees — few have had so varied and so striking experiences to relate, and very few

have such a gift of awakening the interest and carrying with them their listeners in the narration of their adventures."

Allusion has been made already to the benign influence of his parents beginning in his childhood and continuing through his life. He himself was conscious of it, for in writing to his granddaughter in his eighty-sixth year he said:

"If I myself have any special regard for truth I must in great means attribute it to my father and mother who, equally, took pains to inculcate it on their children as the one thing needful in their intercourse with the world."

In December, 1871, Mr. Coit wrote to his sister:

"I am quite surprised myself by my out door performances to-day, in going out into the woods up back of the Winship house, to direct the men in collecting leaves and cedar boughs for our borders, etc. Is it not a

blessing, my dear sister, this sound health and activity, and real enjoyment of life at my time of life. The exemption from all pecuniary care in old age is certainly not a small blessing of itself, and which I feel the more from contrast. True it came late in my case, but none the less on that account should be the thanksgiving and gratitude for it."

One more extract from a letter to his son, bearing date November 28, 1871, fitly closes this chapter of his life:

"This week is eventful in my own case. The twenty-ninth inst. will commemorate the completion of the eighty-fourth year since I first breathed the breath of life, in the house and probably in the very room where I write this. How strange, how passing strange, has the course of this long life been, how wonderfully I have been protected and guided in those strange wanderings, from dangers seen and unseen, through adversity and prosperity, thro' sickness and thro' health, and now at the end to have been brought out into a smooth place, the very spot of all others I

would have chosen, in the enjoyment of health and the blessings of life to a degree allotted to but few of the sons of men: is not here cause for gratitude?

"I regret that your mother's condition prevents our drawing a circle of friends around us on Thanksgiving alike to honor the day, and this old family mansion. The day will be celebrated at the Gilmans' where I shall be found should nothing intervene to prevent."

Thomas Cole, an American artist, a friend and traveling companion of Mr. Coit in Europe, painted a series of allegorical pictures known as The Voyage of Life. The first represents a little child attended by an angel guardian, in a flower-decked boat just launched upon an unknown river. The next, a youth, hopeful, self-confident, taking the tide at its flood in quest of fame and fortune. The third, a man of mature years, tempest-tossed, almost shipwrecked, struggling against storm and rapids.

Thus far we have followed our voyager, and now leave him, cheerful and serene in his eighty-ninth year, on a calm sea under bright skies, still attended by his angel guardian who points him to a happy harbor and heavenly mansions.

In the beautiful cemetery on the banks of the Yantic River at Norwich a suitable monument is inscribed with these words:

DANIEL W. COIT,

born Nov. 29, 1787,
died July 18, 1876.

"*But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.*"

HARRIET FRANCES,

his wife,

born Aug. 15, 1805,
died Oct. 25, 1878.

"*So he giveth his beloved sleep.*"

Daniel Wadsworth Coit.

Dates.

1787. November 29. Born, Norwich, Conn.
1803. Apprenticed to merchants in New York.
1808. Began business on his own account.
1818. September 27. Sailed from New York for Peru.
1819. January 14. Arrived at Lima.
1820. April. Sailed from Guayaquil for Gibraltar.
1820. September 27. Arrived at Gibraltar.
1820–22. Traveled in Spain, France, and England.
1822. June. Sailed from London for South America.
1822. October. Arrived at Buenos Ayres.
1822. December. Crossed the Andes to Valparaiso.
1823. December. Arrived at Lima.
1828. June. Sailed from Lima for New York.
1829. May. Sailed from New York for England.
1829–32. Traveled in Europe.
1832. June. Returned to Norwich.
1833. October. Visited Grand Rapids.
1834. September 1. Married Harriet Frances Coit.

DANIEL WADSWORTH COIT

1834–41. Lived in New York and New Rochelle.
1841–47. Lived in Norwich.
1848. January. To Mexico for Howland and Aspinwall.
1849. March. From Mexico to San Francisco.
1849–52. In business in San Francisco.
1852. June. Returned to his home in Norwich.
1876. July 18. Died, Norwich.

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